TRENDS IN EDUCATION

3

Schools and Social Welfare
Children With Nothing
Place of the Parent
English in America
TV in Teacher Training

JULY 1966

Department of Education and Science

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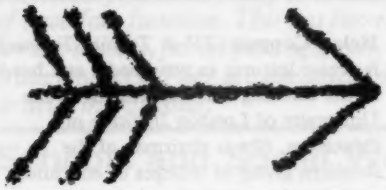

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Children who start out socially handicapped tend also to become educationally handicapped. Instead of getting more and better education than the rest they tend to get less and worse education. This is an educational problem, but to solve it more than education may be needed. In particular, the school may be drawn into the performance of a welfare function. This has far-reaching implications: for the schools, for welfare agencies, and for those who train teachers. They are discussed in the first two articles in this issue.

Schools and Social Welfare

Early in 1966 a conference on this subject was called by the Department of Education and Science. Among the participants were heads of primary and secondary schools, social welfare workers, and lecturers from colleges of education. They met to explore further some problems identified by an earlier conference* on the work of children of secondary school age living in downtown areas: problems described succinctly by the phrase 'education under social handicap'. The handicap is usually poverty, either alone or in association with a broken home or a problem family. Almost by definition the children thus afflicted are most heavily concentrated in down-town schools. For the schools the problems are broadly of two kinds: educational and social. The educational problem is to discover and apply teaching methods which can counter, and if possible compensate for, the social handicap. The social problem concerns the possible role of the school as a welfare agency and its place therefore in the total framework of social administration.

In this article the proceedings of the conference are considered under four heads: the nature of the social handicap; the educational problem it sets for the schools; the welfare role of the school; and the consequences for the colleges of education.

The Nature of the Handicap

The home and cultural background of the child is the dominant factor, for good or ill, in its development. The delinquent child from an area of high delinquency, for example, is probably a well-adjusted child conforming to the cultural pattern of the area. The point was made in an introductory talk by the Superintendent of the Education Welfare Service in Sheffield, who went on to say:

'We must be prepared to deal with families where there is complete indifference to education—families where the sole interest is to get the child away from school and into employment. Relatively high wages can be earned in unskilled jobs by children of very limited attainment and ability. Both the parent and the child often resent the need to remain at school. They regard the last year or so as irksome, even unjust, and endeavour to avoid it as much as possible.

*In July 1964. See *Reports on Education* Nos. 17, 20 and 22 (Free on request from the Department).

'Housing is, of course, a factor in this problem. It can cause poor attendance and poor performance. In the congested areas of our cities there exists a much higher rate of chronic ill health and there are more minor ailments. This is particularly so in houses of multi-occupation or in congested slum property. In appalling housing conditions it is often difficult for parents to maintain reasonable standards of decency and cleanliness, and often health, and indeed even morality can suffer.

'The parents are usually in the lower income groups, often they have sustained a domestic tragedy, death, separation or imprisonment. They depend on an uncertain source of income, or subsist on state aid. They lead a hand-to-mouth existence. If there is an adequate income from a regular wage, other factors usually arise to operate against the interests of the child, such as drinking and gambling by one or other of the parents. Under such conditions even a competent housewife would find it a heartbreaking struggle to keep the children clothed, warm, fed and clean. In many cases these parents themselves are handicapped and are incompetent and even indifferent and have given up the struggle.

'Many of these children sleep three or four in a bed, in overcrowded rooms in which there is more than one bed. It is not unusual even today to find that children sleep on the floor, and then only after the family have settled down for the night, probably in one room in which they cook, eat and watch TV during the day. The consequences of such conditions are obvious—general debility, over-sleeping, in fact no regular pattern of rising. The children. when at school, lack concentration, they are unable to keep pace with other children. Homework is impossible, home study out of the question. A quiet peaceful home is unknown to these children and they find little reward in learning.

'We should also examine the stress placed on children with insecure backgrounds, and particularly the less able ones, as they enter our big secondary schools with six, seven or eight form entry where many specialist teachers are employed. It appears that many children are unable to find the security they formerly found in the smaller primary school. This, coupled with unstable home life, often leads to truancy and delinquency, certainly to stress behaviour. This form of social handicap is found in all levels of our society and occurs in all types of school and neighbourhood and is not confined to the deprived areas. There is the problem, however, of the child from the family where the parents are completely inadequate, and probably without a clock in the house, where no one regularly rises for work in the morning, in fact where no one appears to rise at any particular time or take a meal at any particular time. Nothing is regular at home. In school, on the other hand, everything is regular and generally enjoyable to these children provided they have the strength of character to overcome their initial handicap. I believe that a supportive service is needed here with speedy contact with the homes. This problem is not confined entirely to dull children; there are a few children, probably more than is generally realised, in grammar schools who are working under this handicap—plus the fact that they are also tending to be educated out of the family social and cultural group. Probably many of these children have the intelligence and fibre to make the adjustment and overcome the handicap—others do not. They either transfer to secondary modern streams on lower pressure, or become a problem to the community by anti-social behaviour'.

The point was made that while attention may be concentrated on so-called 'problem children', there may be others who are less conspicuous

as being neither superficially troublesome nor superficially pitiable, but who nevertheless often fail through cultural malnutrition to reach their intellectual potential, and so also to develop attitudes which their teachers wish to encourage. These children need to be enabled 'to enjoy more of themselves' and to raise their cultural and social standards. If children do not present problems at school, the handicaps which they suffer through poor home conditions may pass unnoticed. On the other hand, it would be wrong to assume that all children from such homes must necessarily be seriously handicapped.

Nor is it right to assume that poverty alone produces 'problem' families or 'difficult' children. It is perhaps wiser, in any case, as well as kinder, to speak not of 'problem families' but rather of families with a problem or problems. Many families are frequently if not constantly in need of help, but their confusion and perplexities may stem from a variety of causes. It is easy to say how important it is for a school, when dealing with non-co-operative pupils, to have as full knowledge as possible of the pupils' family circumstances: it is in practice very difficult to ensure that the school's knowledge of individual circumstances is extensive enough, or that parents, particularly when under stress, see the school's rights and demands in proper perspective. It can happen, for instance, that a family sends children to four different schools each applying its own standards and making its own demands on the parents, who may feel exposed to constant pressure and perhaps criticism.

Two experiences quoted during the conference illustrate the sort of setting in which problems of this kind arise, and the extent to which they may be found. In one school's area in a Midland city the last 11 years have seen the collapse of a social pattern which had been stable for a century. In this neighbourhood three generations had lived in the same street and attended the same school. Though part of a city, this was essentially a village community, and the school was essentially a village school, accepted, respected and approachable. Eleven years ago began the influx of newcomers from a number of countries. Houses became overcrowded and streets full of litter. Those of the original inhabitants who could manage to leave the district did so; the rest remained but have never become reconciled to the new customs and practices they see around them. The school, which used to receive generation after generation as pupils, now has a constantly shifting population. The second experience was that of a voluntary worker who described her job as part-time helper to a school of 1,150 boys. Nearly a tenth of them were problem cases of one kind or another; of this group, half were poverty-stricken, and of these a third were immigrant; nearly half were fatherless; and about a quarter came from families with a continuing problem caused by serious neurotic or psychological illness in a parent.

Areas which have received large influxes of immigrants from overseas exhibit the symptoms of deprivation and handicap in an acute form. The problems of their schooling are most intractable at the primary stage, particularly where a high proportion of immigrant mothers are in full employment and cannot take their young children far to school; secondary pupils can travel by themselves and need not be congregated in a nearby school. When the immigrant children cannot speak or even understand English, their most crying need is to be taught in small groups, and this of course gives rise to staffing problems. The inability

of local inhabitants and immigrants to understand one another's language is often matched by a corresponding inability to understand one another's customs. All this is manifest and widely known; but the problems arising are not as easy to solve as they are to recognise. It is worth remembering that the deprivation and handicaps of which many immigrants display conspicuous symptoms are suffered by many other dwellers in down-town areas, though their condition may be less immediately obvious.

The Educational Task

To the outside observer it might seem that all too often the school system, far from compensating for social handicaps, has widened the gap by the progressively selective mechanism. The headmaster of Walworth School, London (Mr. G. A. Rogers) made this his opening point in another of the introductory talks. The old pattern of secondary organisation had tended to abstract those children who surmounted the problems of home and environment and who might have had a stabilising and re-vitalising effect on the rest, and then congregate the residue as a group that now faced educational as well as social deprivation. Here was rejection on a group scale.

'The development of a comprehensive system of education gives us opportunities to attack the whole business of social handicap afresh. But if we take into the comprehensive system attitudes that derive from a different kind of organisation the results may be worse than before. In a comprehensive system the socially deprived tend to find themselves in terms of academic attainment in the lowest 20-30 per cent and tend to be segregated and labelled in remedial forms. As they progress in age they may be further isolated by following special courses—'general and practical' or 'social education' or 'Newsom courses'. The development of examination objectives below GCE level can further isolate them as a deprived or dispossessed class. Just as in the world outside the comfy jobs and the nice homes are out of their reach, so within the school a proper education with the possibility of some national recognition is also not for them. And because they are working now in the same school with those more fortunately endowed, their own sense of deprivation and rejection may be all the more acute.

'And yet we know that children whom various forms of social handicap have rendered backward, apathetic, anti-social, unadaptable, irresponsible, do need special treatment different for a time at least in kind from their fellows. Here then is a problem for the not so distant future: how to answer the needs of these children in such a way as not to isolate them as a separate community within the school; how to make them feel accepted as part of the larger community and as individuals, to feel that the opportunities of others are theirs also; and at the same time, by providing the opportunity to discover and develop and obtain satisfaction from such gifts as they have, to enable them to recognise and accept their limitations with equanimity. The answer to this problem lies in the organisation and attitudes of the school.

'If we can master the problem of the assimilation of the group, we still have to face a second problem; how we make the individual child feel that he matters, that he has his place and is known and cared about and accepted as an individual; how also to make him accept school as an important and exciting part in his life which he will not want to miss; how to prevent the polarisation of his world—home and school, us and them, with no common ground and no bridges?

'The answer to this one lies firstly in the school's attitude to the homes, the parents and the environment, and its organisation for bringing the parents into the school and into contact with the teachers. For many of our parents school is something which the law inflicts on them and which they regard as an unwelcome imposition on their freedom of action. Too often the school by its attitude reinforces this idea. But when parents are winkled out by devious means and eventually got into the school, treated sympathetically as human beings in language they can understand, and made to realise that the school is not just concerned with enforcing the law but with seeing that Johnny gets "fair do's" in life, their co-operation —without which Johnny doesn't stand a chance—can often be won.

'But the main answer here lies with the individual teachers, particularly the form teachers, and in their attitude and approach. There must be a willingness to understand the child's background and get to know him and his family history. There must be respect for individual personality and acceptance of the child for what he is, not resentment or antipathy because of what he is not. There must be recognition of the gap between the teacher's own cultural experiences and values and those of the child, but a determination to understand and appreciate those of the child, to look for common ground and seek to build bridges.

'My third problem concerns the limitations of language and environment. An inadequate command of vocabulary and language structures leads to inability to crystallise and generalise from experience and cope with the extension of it. But within the limited field of these children's experience is a richness, swamped in vague, instinctive, chaotic feelings. We must bring this to the surface and get the children to turn their own spotlight on it by crystallising it in language. We must not be afraid or shocked by what we find but accept it readily and lead outward from it. This is the work primarily of the English teacher who must realise that command of language cannot be developed in the abstract but only as it is applied to the identification and control of experience. And his source material must be in the life, real and imaginary, that his children live. The medium for his work is primarily talk. We don't do enough of this. We are frightened of it. We feel it is unproductive, there is nothing to show at the end of it, and a talking lesson can so easily get out of hand.'

The crux of the educational problem is that such children suffer from poverty and under-nourishment in experience, and need all the enrichment which the school can supply. The conference spent some time in considering how best the schools can meet this need and help them to the satisfaction which comes through the power of self-expression. Opportunities to take part in conversation are given too little space in the school timetable. They help, incidentally, to develop easy relationships between teacher and pupil, particularly if the group for these periods can be kept small; indeed, if ten minutes can be found during the week for an 'individual tutorial', this can give a child a bigger boost to morale and general confidence than a much longer period spent as one pupil competing for the teacher's attention with many others.

What will these deprived children find to talk about ? Their experience can be extended in several ways. A particularly valuable way, for children living in ugly, over-crowded, urban conditions, is to take them for short periods to a completely new environment, for a 'school journey' or a residential course. Several useful results may emerge: the new environment is exciting, and excitement leads to more spon-

taneous and less self-conscious expression; both pupils and teachers gain fresh insights, as they see each other in new situations; there is a useful levelling among the children, as those who have never made their mark in school are found to be skilful in the activities suggested by the new environment. Expeditions of this kind can only occur occasionally, but there is no need to go far from any school to find material for useful conversation; more important than the nature of the district explored is the imagination, enthusiasm, opportunism, knowledge and powers of exposition possessed by the guides who accompany the young explorers. Even short expeditions cost money, and much may depend on winning the co-operation of parents. Many parents of the children with which the conference was primarily concerned would be unable or unwilling to contribute to the cost of such activities. Instances were quoted showing the generosity and imagination of some local education authorities in aiding schools with grants for travelling, sometimes by means of issuing bus-tokens for use by children in down-town schools when engaged in educational visits in the neighbourhood.

Educational programmes on radio and television are established features of the curriculum, but not enough use is made as yet of the pupils' out-of-school experience of these mass media. Teachers should be prepared to listen to and look at programmes which their pupils naturally choose, to discuss them without any air of patronage, and to use the experience to sharpen their pupils' perceptions. Discussion of articles in popular magazines, as well as encouraging expression and developing the critical faculties, gives the children something which they can discuss at home. This encourages home conversation, gives children a sense of security from the realisation that there is something which they can discuss equally at home and in school, and may induce the parents to believe that the school is not entirely remote from or unsympathetic towards their own particular world.

There is considerable agreement about the importance of drama, art and craft as means of expression and of relieving emotional tension. One primary school head found that drama was 'possibly the most effective means of "drawing out" children working under social handicap.' Concentration on oral and dramatic work in English must reduce the timetable available for writing. This was not thought to be a disadvantage: in many schools far too much time is in any case devoted to uncreative writing, and it is by no means certain that a reduced quota of time need result in less writing being produced; the transition from animated discussion to fluent writing is easy and natural.

* * * *

Although the highly complex debate on the merits and demerits of streaming, setting and mixed-ability groups was not pursued in any detail, the conference heard from the headmistress of one London school that for two years the teachers had been examining their own attitudes and their function as teachers, and that they had finally decided that they were maintaining within the school the attitude towards the girls already held and determined by the rest of society and were therefore deepening and strengthening anti-social behaviour rather than healing it.

'This brought us to the logical conclusion that the organisation of the school must be such as to make it seen and felt that there was no single difference in any single respect between one girl and another.

It is clear that girls live up to or down to the labels put upon them. Therefore we must have no conscious difference of attitudes towards able and less able girls. Intelligence is not fixed and ability can be developed. Co-operation, we felt, must replace competition. We embarked therefore on what seemed to us a rational form of organisation, bearing in mind the previous facts. We organised the incoming 150 first-year girls in mixed-ability groups with no sets for any subject. We made six forms of 25 in each and released the skilled and experienced head of remedial department from the responsibility of a form in order that she could be free to advise and help. We then mixed the groups according to age, extent of social handicap and place of birth. It is important to bear in mind that this form of organisation was not embarked upon with any great degree of enthusiasm or from profound educational conviction.

At the end of one term working with these groups the staff found the following results:

(i) a lack of tension in the classroom;
(ii) an increase in stable behaviour and a consequent decrease of anti-social behaviour;
(iii) an absorbed interest in work and classroom activities;
(iv) a sense of co-operation among the pupils themselves;
(v) a higher than usual attendance rate;
(vi) a rapid improvement in the mental ages of the least able;
(vii) more time to deal with the girls who are anti-social and difficult on arrival;
(viii) a deeper interest in their work and a sense of excitement on the part of the staff, who are having to re-think their subject;
(ix) a greater sense of co-operation between the staff and a more relaxed atmosphere in the staff room;
(x) obvious possibility of breaking down the curriculum which is subject-based into one with a thematic or project approach.

Other conference members had found a combination of unstreamed forms and 'setting' satisfactory. The essential factor for success in any organisational pattern seemed to be that the staff should be prepared to accept the worst of every pupil, and be ready to adapt to personal needs. It is in any case important to avoid as far as possible what one headmaster described as 'the malignant combination of unwilling teacher and unwilling class'.

Opinions varied as to how far pupils were confused or stimulated by a change from the one-teacher relation of the primary school class to the variety of specialist teachers encountered in the secondary school; different children react in different ways. All children on entering their new school should have sufficient contact with at least one teacher to establish a confident relationship quickly; it was important to avoid giving a few members of staff their whole teaching time with handicapped children. Heads of 'senior schools' in a two-tier system, which receive pupils from 'high schools' at age 13 or 14, appear to suffer peculiar disadvantage unless a thorough and systematic procedure is established for transmitting information about individual pupils from high school to senior school.

The School and Social Welfare

The conference did not find it easy to keep separate the educational and welfare roles of the school. The staff of one urban girls' school,

accepting that the school must absorb the social misfits and that the school community must become the healing agent, accepted also that the teacher, unskilled as she is as a welfare officer and psychiatrist, must nevertheless do social work 'as a real part of her job'.

Such discussions emphasised the essential duality in the role of the school, and the nature of the spectrum which starts at one end with instruction, and develops through a broader conception of education which leads on to pastoral care, and finishes at the other end with something much akin to social welfare. Should the teaching profession, in its practical planning, concentrate first on revising the curriculum and teaching methods in order to meet the needs of deprived children and evoke a useful response from them, or begin by making a closer study of the social background? One approach is to argue that adults in 'problem families' have failed for one reason or another to learn a necessary minimum of facts, skills and concepts to cope with life, and the main task of the school therefore is to see that the children do learn to cope. This, by and large, is a question first of understanding the problem and then of devising appropriate curricula and teaching methods, and is not a matter of social care. Another approach is to claim that insufficient emphasis has hitherto been placed on the pastoral role of the teacher, to ask whether the time has come for radically changing this role, and to advocate the training and appointment of men and women to be partly teachers and partly social workers or counsellors.

There can be no doubting the need for skilled observation by persons of sensitivity and understanding, for early diagnosis of troubles, for the early referral of children needing treatment to the appropriate experts, and a general pooling of information by all those who have one part or another to play in education and welfare work. One danger signal is truancy: it is often a sign of generally declining standards and may indicate serious disturbance. But detection at eleven, or even at seven, is often not early enough. It was argued that children from deprived and culturally impoverished homes should find a place in a nursery school or a pre-school play group. Nursery school teachers always met a mother, father or close relative of their pupils, because very young children have to be brought to school; they can become the trusted confidantes of the family. This is the moment when it is most easy and fruitful to give help and advice and the best opportunity for taking preventive measures. When a child is aged 5, the school medical officer, together with the head, the class teacher and perhaps a social worker, can detect his handicap at the first school medical inspection. In practice, however, these early opportunities are not always exploited, and teachers are faced with children at a later stage whose handicap should ideally have been spotted and treated much earlier.

The ability to spot such weakness quickly, and the knowledge and attitude enabling one to refer the child to the right expert immediately, are qualities essential to a teacher in a school which has socially handicapped children. The need is obvious for effective liaison between the schools and outside welfare agencies. There was a strong feeling at the conference that the schools needed a skilled, supporting liaison service, comparable in some respects with the medical social services supporting hospitals; this was, for one member at least, a 'desperate need'. Liaison was also stressed as an essential factor not

only between school and neighbourhood or school and welfare services, but also among the numerous social agencies which 'might impinge confusingly on a single family'. Not only is there considerable variety in the pattern and extent of educational and social welfare services in different parts of the country; there is also a multiplicity of agencies within a particular area, and this may cause confusion at more than one level. Some schools have compiled lists of the various agencies from which help can be sought in emergency; others are not sure of the right person to approach. A number of visits by different workers to the same family can destroy the effectiveness of each, and a system involving numerous social agencies and offering a fragmented service can create wasteful anomalies. It was recognised that neither the schools nor the outside welfare services had adequate resources to meet the needs of really deprived areas.

Many education welfare officers were already functioning as social welfare workers of sincerity, knowledge and skill; if there were enough of them, they should be able in almost all cases to tell a secondary school head how many of this first-year intake would be suffering from social handicaps. Unfortunately, education welfare officers were very unevenly spread. In one northern city, the area where most of the handicapped children were concentrated could call on the services of one officer only: in a south-western city, two such officers were available to help any teacher who appealed for aid. Another authority has established a permanent team of three after an experiment in which two officers secured an impressive reduction in absenteeism by concentrating for seven weeks on three schools in the centre of the city. It is thought that their work could be further developed as a general support for the teachers and effective home-school liaison. Provided they are not saddled with too heavy case-loads and there are enough of them, EWOs could perhaps cope with the problem of incoming population by visiting all newcomers, and might even deal with foreign immigrants if a few bilingual immigrant parents were invited to become welfare officers. Such officers are probably most effective when assigned to a group of schools. Given an assignment of this kind, they were more likely to stay in the job, and a substantial period of time in one area makes it easier to take a long view educationally.

* * * *

The discussion concentrated on three topics: (i) possible expansion of the Education Welfare Service on reasonably uniform lines throughout the country, and recognised as the main instrument through which all social and welfare work outside the schools should be co-ordinated; (ii) a proposal that schools in socially handicapped districts should have on the staff somebody with specialist training as a teacher/social worker; (iii) the relationship between these two proposals.

The main advocates in favour of expanding and developing the Education Welfare Service conceived it as a professional service acceptable to all other professional bodies, with standardised training and qualifications, giving the officers a status which would ensure that the service would attract the best type of applicant. There was wide support for the view that a unifying and co-ordinating service was urgently needed to clear up confusion, to prevent wasteful overlap, and ensure that help was available where it was needed. There seemed to be advantages, too, in having the welfare officer based outside the

school clearly linked with a specific group of schools. It was important that the welfare officer's liaison with the school should be at classroom level when the circumstances made this appropriate.

A case was advanced for appointing specially trained teacher/social workers—at any rate as an experiment—in schools with a substantial amount of truancy and similar problems. They would maintain liaison with social and welfare workers of all kinds outside the school; inside they would operate especially with the remedial department, if there was one, giving advice to fellow-members of staff and setting standards by their example in the treatment of handicapped children. In small schools and in primary schools they might be involved in home visiting, especially visits to 'normal' homes which were not visited by welfare workers.

Former teachers might be prepared to return to school as part-time workers with children in special need, and as liaison officers with the welfare services outside. They would not necessarily pay formal visits to homes themselves, but would refer individual children to those fitted to give them extra help, and thus indirectly promote contacts between these experts and the home. Married women who felt they no longer had the physical or mental energy to cope with full or exacting classes would nevertheless be welcome as part-time or full-time workers of this kind, having both the experience and the personal qualities for the work.

Many conference members saw a pressing need *both* for the appointment of teacher/social workers to school staffs, charged, amongst other duties, with that of liaison with welfare services outside the school, *and* for the expansion and development of an organised education welfare service through which the various forms of present provision could be co-ordinated. There was an occasional expression of fear lest the teacher/social workers and the Education Welfare Officers would get in each other's way, particularly if they both paid regular home visits, but the majority view seemed in favour of encouraging both developments in a spirit of co-operation. The contribution currently made in some areas by part-time voluntary workers was recognised by the conference as extremely valuable and none of the suggestions made for the development of professional services was intended to discourage or replace this contribution in the future.

Need for Wider Training

What kind of teacher is likely to deal successfully with socially handicapped children, and what specialised training should be provided? These questions were raised in a third introductory talk, by a university lecturer in education with experience in training teachers of severely sub-normal children (Mrs M. Stevens).

'*We might take the point of view that young inexperienced teachers should be discourage from working with the socially handicapped. If we do hold this view, we need to think of how to encourage and how to select teachers with a stated length of successful service to take special advanced courses in colleges of education or university departments. The latter might be the more satisfactory places for this purpose because of the possibility of a student gaining from a variety of departments—education, sociology, extra-mural departments where child care courses may be held, social and preventive medicine, etc. We might, of course, take the view that with a*

careful selection of mature and interested candidates a highly specialised and separate form of training, leading to a teacher/social worker qualification might be more appropriate than a general training plus advanced study.

'Teachers who work in schools with pupils from culturally deprived families should possess a great degree of confidence in their own ability to cause children to learn ultimately, for the amount of "playing up" such children are capable of, in their desire to gain attention and to communicate, often causes a teacher without such a quality not only a great deal of mental stress but also to reject the idea of working in such schools altogether.

'It is encumbent upon the colleges of education and the departments concerned in universities to plan experiences for students which will enable them to gain some insight into and some knowledge of the interests, customs and ways of thinking of social groups different from their own. Surveys of specific areas carried out under the guidance of a sociologist and based upon discussions of first-hand observation will give some insight. Students need to become involved with families and people from different social classes in informal ways, for example by being responsible during training for the play groups organised by voluntary bodies such as Family Service Units or by progressive local authorities, or by helping in a home where there is a mentally handicapped child, or by visiting the home of an old person, or becoming a voluntary home help when a baby is born. Not the least important amongst possible experiences from which teachers in training might profit would be in spending a specified number of days in home visits and case conferences in the company of professional welfare workers or spending residential periods in children's homes, reception centres or approved schools.

'Workers in this field need to understand (i) what is meant by a "team" approach to the problem of education both within the school with colleagues and with workers from outside; (ii) the importance of training in skilled observation; (iii) the necessity for making detailed records for use in discussion with all concerned with the child. One of the problems in training social workers lies in encouraging them to share their findings with other professional workers and be prepared to receive information in exchange. Secondly, teachers need to understand thoroughly the practical machinery for referring a child for other expert help and the necessity for passing on their recorded observations at the time of referral. They need to feel that their own dignity as teachers will not suffer if they admit that here is a problem in which they need extra help and guidance. In their relationships with the children they need to adopt the attitude that they are entirely on the side of the child. This will, of course, demand some re-thinking and re-orientation by some teachers about discipline and punishment.'

A 'much more thorough attack on the problem' which was suggested was the establishment of an experimental college of education in close relationship with a group of schools (nursery, infant, junior and secondary) in an urban area, with the task of studying some causes and effects of social handicap and of training teachers in the basic skills needed to cope with the problem. In such a college, students might be trained to teach the whole range of pupils from the nursery to school-leaving age, because a teacher trying to teach a 14-year-old to read needs to know about the techniques used at six and later, but must also be aware of the material appropriate to her adolescent pupil. After training, teachers might spend a year or two in infant or junior schools

in different areas before tackling a secondary school post. Such a training would help to bridge the primary/secondary communication barrier.

A college, it was thought, gains in effectiveness by offering in-service courses to practising teachers, who can join the initial training-course students in discussions and on teaching practice, so adding an essential element of maturity and experience. It would be useful if teachers from local schools joined in discussions and attended lectures, and if tutors taught in the schools alongside their students. Colleges might with advantage develop into centres where practising teachers could sample new equipment and come together for conferences of various topics, including problems arising out of social handicap, and on ways of forging links between home and school. The presence of welfare officers and other social workers would clearly give added value to these conferences. Close relationships with the Schools Council, the universities and other institutions would help to keep colleges in touch with current research and development projects.

A primary head teacher talks to TRENDS *about her experiences with socially handicapped children, and outlines ways she thinks they might be helped while in school.*

Children with Nothing

Gladstone was in his second term as Prime Minister when they built the school in Bessemer Grove (writes Martyn Clémans). The leaving age had been raised from ten to thirteen by the Elementary Education Act of 1880, *and education was just ceasing to be a novelty in the slums. They constructed it out of sandstone on the side of a slight hill so that the playground slopes down to where the lavatories are, and to that cowshed affair common in the old elementary schools where the children still play in wet weather and which now doubles as staff garage. They gave it walls of sandstone two feet thick, and placed the windows high up so that the outside world should not disturb young minds at study. The sandstone is so dark now, with generations of soot from the steel works that shut in the Bessemer Grove area, that it looks like black granite.*

Twelve classrooms open off a D-shaped hall; classrooms so high that the ceilings are lost in gloom. The hall is high too, sixty feet and more, and supported by six cross-beams made not of iron or steel as you might expect, but oak, two feet square in section. These will be worth money to the contractors when the school is demolished in 1968, *as it is scheduled to be.*

The headmistress of Bessemer Road Junior Mixed and Infants, is Miss Katherine Worth, a small, twinkling woman in her early fifties with iron grey hair and bright green eyes that narrow when she laughs—which she does often—and a pair of those butterfly-wing glasses made famous by Marjorie* (Daily Mirror) *Proops.*

Miss Worth has been at Bessemer Grove, with one very short break, when she was a deputy head elsewhere, for twenty-eight years. Everyone in the district knows her. This was abundantly clear when we walked from the bus stop along past Woolworths and the new supermarket to the school.

Bessemer Grove is dying, in spite of the new electric lamps installed last year, in spite of the bright, prosperous looking high street shops. The area is scheduled for clearance and factories will expand into it. The population of Bessemer Grove and Tuchman Street, and all the area around is being moved piecemeal to new estates on the edge of the city. Miss Worth told me that in 1915 *the school, then an all-age elementary school had a population approaching a thousand children. When she got her headship in* 1955 *it had* 420 *pupils. This July the total is down to* 180 *and six of its classrooms stand empty.*

Most of the pupils are and always have been steelworkers' children. A few others might come from small shops, or have fathers who work in local garages or back-street light industry. The school has not taken up the

*The views expressed in this article are those of a head teacher in a North Midlands primary school. Her real name is not Miss Worth nor is the name of her school Bessemer Grove.

modern mathematics, and my suggestion of primary French brought a smile from Miss Worth: 'English is difficult enough for the local children let alone the immigrants', *she said. A few children do 'pass' the eleven plus each year (about 1 in 12) and while I was there a surprise visitor arrived—a past pupil who had qualified as a teacher and was now moving back to the north Midlands. She wanted to know could she join the staff? She could—Miss Worth looked rightly proud of her.*

This seemed to illustrate a point—as did the starting up, just then, of the red Austin Healey (insurance £100 per annum) I had seen parked in the yard (workmen were in the school and it belonged to one of the young carpenters). 'The children I would call socially handicapped,' Miss Worth said, 'are not just working class, usually they have completely inadequate and often subnormal parents. Many of the fathers cannot read, or drink to excess or have gone off with another woman. Other children have never had fathers other than in a physiological sense. They may have mothers whose social behaviour is that of the Middle Ages in terms of morals and hygiene. You know we talk glibly about common-sense—have you ever been in a home where there is none? I remember once last winter I was alarmed by the state of the underclothes of a boy who had changed for PE I sent a note to the mother asking her to wash the boy's clothes. She did. But didn't dry them! She sent him to school next day sopping wet—and there was snow on the ground. Presumably the boy had no clothes other than those he stood in and obviously the woman was inadequate as a mother. Other children in the school are in the same position. Many of our mothers never bothered to get up to see the children off to school. One of my nine-year-old boys used to get up and make breakfast for the five children younger than himself while his mother slept. He was undersized and had to stand on a stool to reach the gas stove. One morning when he was making toast under the grill and standing on the stool his shirt caught fire and all his body and one arm were so terribly burnt that he was on the danger list for a month. Nothing has been done about this. He is back home now and things are just the same.

'After being evicted, another family with ten small children shared a four-roomed house with another family with five children. Each family had one room upstairs and one downstairs. The bath was in one of these downstairs rooms but was not used as a bath but as a family wardrobe, and consequently each morning the bath became a "Lucky Dip", with everyone scrambling for the best clothes.

'Several of my families have insufficient beds so that the children sleep on the floor or the bottom of the bed or on the settee. I once had a child who was so scared when his father was drunk that he slept in the hen house. Many children cannot go to sleep until their parents are in bed, as the TV is in the room they sleep in. Very few children sleep in rooms where the window will open and so every morning they come to school yawning, either from lack of sleep or lack of air.'

I asked Miss Worth about immigrants and how they affected the school. 'We don't have a great many, only about twenty children in the school are from overseas—mostly Pakistan, and there are one or two Jamaicans. The family background of most of the immigrants is much better than the worst of the natives of the town, but unfortunately they have to take the very worst housing. With immigrants it is the

language difficulty we are up against of course, but many of the immigrant children are quite bright and learn to read and write English amazingly quickly. But then you would expect them to be better than average wouldn't you—usually it's quick-witted, ambitious people that come here."

Terms like 'child poverty' and 'social handicap' have been invented to describe children whose home background is unsatisfactory. This may be because the family has a low income—and in The Poor and the Poorest, *published last year, Abel-Smith and Townsend revealed that there are* 300,000 *children in Britain in families with an income at or about National Assistance level. Two-thirds of these children are of school age. These children set Miss Worth and her colleagues special problems.*

'In better districts the odd cases of children suffering under social handicap can more easily be coped with; in an area like Bessemer Grove the overall low level makes things very much worse. Some of these families if given better housing conditions would improve—I have seen this happen many times. But for others this is not enough. Many inadequate parents don't know how to use the facilities when they are provided with them. They don't know how to allocate their money to the best advantage. They don't know how to keep their houses clean. They don't know how to feed their family when there is no chip shop on the doorstep. They don't know how to mix with strangers. They are lost in their new surroundings and miss their life-long neighbours, so that, if they can, they return to their old neighbourhood, by surrendering their key to someone who really does want to get out. All this reflects on children in school; they cannot learn because their minds are occupied with home worries. Often they are trying to solve problems beyond their capacity and understanding. At first, when a child realises that his or her home is not all it should be, or his father is sent to prison, he feels ashamed. This goes on until life becomes unbearable, and the feeling of inferiority not to be borne. They find an outlet by becoming a nuisance, a liar, a thief in order to get their own back against society'.

How Can We Help?

I asked Miss Worth how she thought the school could help these children —if indeed it could help them at all.

'There are lots of ways,' she said, 'and our new primary schools incorporate some improvements; but a new school usually isn't all gain. In building many new schools there is a tendency to pinch pennies. Often one room is provided for each class and the only spare space may be a landing or corridor—all right in theory but a failure in practice. From the point of view of space, teachers like old Victorian schools—such as Bessemer Grove—which once held a great many more children. But that's about the only way. New schools, because they are new, are a stimulus in themselves.

'There are many ways we could improve the social amenities of old schools. Washing facilities that really are adequate, with showers, wash basins, towels, and above all plenty of hot water are urgently needed. Good toilets and more of them—indoors, not out across the yard—should be built; do you know that many of my children wait until they get to school because we have toilet paper! The playing space in schools should be available day, night and at weekends; my school is locked up when the last teacher leaves—in an area where the

nearest park is three miles away! We need dining rooms where good eating habits can be taught—some of the children that arrive at this school only know how to eat with their fingers. Then there are small things like money to buy paper handkerchiefs for those children who do not bring even a bit of rag with them to school and who have never owned a handkerchief that was wholly theirs in their lives; money for school trips—I never have trips from Bessemer Grove; how can I, when many of the parents wouldn't give their children money to go even if they had it? If we had a trip and some children couldn't go on it, it would only increase their feeling of rejection.

'Those are the specific things, but there are others that are more general. We need to make schools more attractive places to be in. It's a matter of money again; money to buy plants and flowers; money to buy attractive vases to put them in—jam jars aren't a substitute, whatever the LEA may think; more frequent painting of schools—pride of ownership and respect for property only comes from living in attractive surroundings—it's the dirty lavatories that get their walls written on, not clean ones, and dirty schools that get smashed up, not bright modern ones—this isn't the whole story, of course, but it is part of it.

'The kind of teaching we need is different with these children too, as their mothers have never told them bedtime stories. They need to be told stories very frequently. In this way they become more interested in books and ask to see the pictures. Then they want to talk about the pictures and plenty of time should be allowed for this. Many, coming from homes where parents have no time to talk to them or take any interest in answering their questions, find normal conversation strange. Their most crying need is communication, so situations must be created where they can talk and ask questions. They need plenty of space so that they can run about and skip and jump and enjoy themselves. They need to be able to shout and sing, which often they can't do at home as father is in bed as he is on night shift. They need to hear good music at their own level. They need to be able to have the joy of moving to music, and so each school should have at least one good pianist as well as a gramophone, wireless and tape recorder. They need to be able to dress up as all generations of children before them have done. This should lead naturally on to free drama among themselves and not for an audience.

'Once the children have begun talking naturally to the teacher, explaining pictures, running errands to other classes, acting stories out and so on and have become interested in books, they are usually wanting to learn to read. As reading is usually the first major failure with this type of child it is vital that it is not attempted before they are capable of mastering it. Often this is not until seven years old. When it is begun too early the feeling of inadequacy builds up again and untold harm is done.

'The school assembly is, I think, a ceremony all important to these children. Here, for a short period each day, they must learn to conduct themselves as members of society, learning self-control and to respect the wishes of other people. This is the beginning of law and order and citizenship. As the children reach the junior stage simple lessons can be taken showing that all work, however humble, is essential to the well-being of society, and so has a purpose.

'I think we need more ancillary help in the schools too, and caretakers (custodians or whatever you call them) who are more sympathetic to children's needs. If the school is to remain open the custodian's role will have to change and with it many of his present attitudes. We need more help from associated services like the School Medical Service. Here's what happens in my area with speech therapy—the child only gets it if the mother will take him to the clinic. What attitude do mothers take? 'He can have the treatment if he can get there on his own—I ain't got no bleedin time t'take him"—and she probably hasn't if she has got six or seven other children on her hands. So the child doesn't go: the case is closed. It's the same with Child Guidance, the worst cases get closed. Why can't the speech therapists and the education psychologists come to the schools?—it would be wasteful of their time, I know, but the children who need help most would be reached.

'Then there's the Welfare Service. I am lucky in having a welfare officer who eats his lunch at my school each day. This is a great help as it means that any difficulties that arise are dealt with the same day—I feel this should be a feature in all schools of this type. The problems are immediate. The next day is often too late. I think also that welfare officers in these areas should have fewer families on their lists.

'Again I'm lucky in that the school clinic is only five minutes away from the school. This is most valuable as often children are sent when they are ill or have nasty cuts and boils that need treatment. As the clinic sister is also a health visitor she is my greatest help since she can get into the homes. Being a really dedicated person she is able to offer sound advice to parents and often she gives them practical demonstrations of how to look after their children'.

So Much to Give

We talked about staff turnover which I expected to hear was high in Bessemer Grove. 'If they stay a month in this kind of school like as not they will stay a long time. We've always had a good team spirit here, in this kind of school it is essential. The junior school has six teachers, not counting the head, the infants three. Of these, four have been with me more than ten years, most of the others more than five, and the deputy head has been here 20 years. But you've got to be a certain type to work in this kind of area. It takes more than sympathy—some of the most sympathetic people I know wouldn't last five minutes. You've got to be the motherly (or fatherly) type, and tolerant yet tough. It's no place for the dictatorial, the squeamish or the easily shocked.

'One thing about teaching in this kind of school is there is so much you can give these children. Most of them have nothing. Nothing in the physical sense and nothing in the intellectual sense. Their homes are without books and without conversation. We didn't need Bernstein to tell us it's lack of conversation that stunts these children—any primary school teacher in a school like this could tell you that. Not that I don't think his work is valuable, he gets listened to, we don't!

'Do you know,' she went on, 'we even have to teach some of these children how to play. When they first come here they sit around with vacant expressions. Communication by them and with them is non-existent. In the infants we get some children that aren't even toilet

trained—at five! In slum areas—oh I mustn't call them that now, must I?—in twilight areas, nursery schools are almost essential. Contact between the children and people other than their parents cannot start young enough.

'The success of a school in this kind of area depends on the relationships between all the people in it. The teachers have to pull together as a team. There can be no jealousy or pettiness or life would be unendurable. The teacher's knowledge of family history, background and ability to communicate with this type of child are more important than knowing how far Tommy has got with his sums; why he is always so tired; why he is ashamed of stripping for P.E.; why he wants to play truant; why he likes to break things; why having found reading too hard for him in the infants he has given up trying. Can one blame teachers for avoiding all these extra difficulties? Why should they come here when they are given no incentive?'

I asked her how she thought we could attract more teachers to work in schools like Bessemer Grove. 'Money is at the root of the problem isn't it?' she said. 'Everyone wants their fair share. Since graded posts were introduced into our schools real stability has largely disappeared. Staffs are continually changing; yet there are still a great many teachers today of the right calibre who have a love for these children and want to teach them. Unfortunately they are forced to leave schools like mine to take a graded post elsewhere, in order that their families might have a decent standard of living. I think extra salary increments should be given for service in schools like Bessemer Grove, plus a travel allowance and public recognition of status. At present these teachers are often regarded by the outside world as inferior—a public relations campaign might help here. Then we need better working facilities. These are usually schools without satisfactory staff rooms and even indoor toilets—it isn't just the children who have to troop across the yard!

'Something else that should be considered is a scheme to allow transfer to another area occasionally to recharge your batteries. Usually if you stay in this type of area too long and then ask for a transfer you are moved to a school of the same kind because the Authority knows you can cope. Part-time teachers need encouragement to come here. Married women who are doing supply teaching won't usually work outside their home area—give them twice the salary, or better still make what they are paid tax free and they'd come down town in droves. At present when a member of my staff is absent it is usually impossible to get a temporary replacement.

Lastly, I think we must have a more generous staffing ratio in these schools. It is impossible to help children with social or emotional difficulties in large classes. We need to get much closer to these children than we have been doing and we need time to give them individual attention and help. At the same time we should also get close to the parents. Above all this is the head's job. In this kind of school if a good relationship exists between the parents and the head teacher then the children begin to feel secure and half the battle is won'.

Relations between schools and parents are improving.
Is the improvement fast enough?
Has it gone far enough?

The Place of the Parent

NOEL COWEN

It would appear from the literature of the time that in the years just after World War I many parents considered they were doing the teacher a favour by sending their children to school at all. In the year that Mr. Fisher's Act went on the Statute Book, a correspondent was writing in the *Nineteenth Century* magazine: 'Sorely as many elementary schools need reforming, many elementary-school children's mothers need reforming more sorely still; and reformed they must be, with all possible speed, if the new Education Act is to do the work for which it is being framed.'* But not all was black. It is recorded of one elementary school in 1920 that it tried 'to bring the influence of the parent to bear upon the child's conduct in class or playground', with visits to the home 'in order to take counsel with the parents', particularly in cases of miscounduct; and at a large girls' secondary school the headmistress 'started small meetings, of about thirty parents at a time, asking them to come to tea and talk about matters connected with the school, taking the greatest care to consult them whenever they could give advice, and she found that the parents talked freely and readily, and helped greatly by the light they could throw on school conduct, and by their description of the way in which they dealt with the sex question'.† There is no reason to suppose that these were totally isolated examples.

Ten years later it was being said that 'progressive schools everywhere' were setting up parent-teacher associations, but in the opinion of Dr. Norman Glaister of the Child's Study Society, parents still had a lot to learn: they 'should have had, from the outset of their careers as parents, some knowledge of the nature of the problems which confront the educators of children, and of the general lines along which their solution is to be sought'.‡ A more homely link was provided by the Mothers' Fellowship at an infants school in a Liverpool slum, where mothers could bring their children any school day to be given a bath 'with plenty of hot water, towels and soap, and an electric fire generously provided by the education authority'.§ It would have pleased the writer in the *Nineteenth Century* two decades earlier to learn that one result of the fellowship was that 'loud-spoken, quarrelsome mothers' became 'quiet and friendly', coming in and out of the school "discussing the problems of their children with the teachers, for the common good of "the child in the midst".' It may be a little more difficult for the present generation of parents to take in all that was

**Nineteenth Century* March 1918. 'The Elementary School Child's Mother', by Edith Sellers.

†*Educational Experiments in England*, Alice Woods, Methuen, 1920.

‡*Education in a Changing Commonwealth*. The New Education Fellowship, 1931.

§*Teachers World and Schoolmistress*, 1936. Report by Miss J. R. Crosbie headmistress.

implied by the further comment that 'unemployed fathers have become interested in coming to see the children working in the school'.

In the 1937 edition of the *Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers* the Board of Education joined in the slowly rising chorus of cautious approval. After warning the teacher against striking an attitude that might be mistaken 'for one of superiority on his part and so make children ashamed of their parentage or their neighbourhood', the Board commended the use of education weeks, exhibitions of school work, and open days when 'parents find themselves able to discuss matters of common interest with teachers and managers'. Another suggestion was that parents might share in their children's hobbies and have their joint work presented at school. (Those were the days—before the arrival of television—of fretwork on the kitchen table and rug-making round the family fire. But today's parents who go to school-based evening institutes for classes in pottery and painting and to keep abreast of children learning French will get the idea—particularly when the children go to the institute's open day to look at Mum's work!). By these and other means teachers were urged to dispel the harmful error 'that the work of the schools is a mystery not to be penetrated except by the initiated', and to offset the view of their charges of 'the things they do at school and the things they do at home as belonging to two different worlds having little or no connection with each other'. On the subject of linking parents more formally with the work of the schools the Minister (House of Commons, 30th November 1945) thought 'it would be unwise to try to impose a uniform system' but hoped that the many parent-teacher associations up and down the country would be extended still further.

The National Union of Teachers also at this time took a hard look at parent-teacher relations. In a statement of executive policy issued in November 1946 they recognised that PTAs had 'in many cases made a valuable contribution to the furthering of friendly relationships between parents and teachers'; and as 'this increased interest on the part of parents has an important contribution to make towards the raising of educational standards', associations were approved where 'in the opinions of the head teachers and staff of the school, this method of securing parent-teacher co-operation is desirable'. But the NUT had two warnings to give: 'the burden thrown on the teachers by an over-development of the social functions'; and possible interference 'with the internal working of the school or to over-rule the power which is vested in the head teacher by the Local Education Authority'. On the whole the Union appeared to favour 'informal means of co-operation, which have developed in the typical British way', and which 'should not lightly be exchanged for a more formal kind of co-operation'.

Education officers also had a divided mind on the subject, according to an inquiry made, under distinguished patronage, by the then influential Association for Education in Citizenship. Its Schools Committee produced a report on 'Democracy in school life' which contained the following passage on parents' associations:

> In no other part of the inquiry were opinions found to be so divided. Almost side by side there were two areas in which one Chief Education Officer believed the development of full parent-teacher co-operation to be essential to the future of education, whereas the other officer was convinced that to let the parents get any nearer than the necessary formal contact was 'just asking for trouble'.

Turning from opinions to observed results the committee affirmed:

> About this there can be no doubt. Whichever may be cause and which effect, every day school that was outstanding for its community development, the quality of its personal relationship, and for the capacity of the children to co-operate and accept responsibility, was also outstanding in its eagerness to get together with the parents.

The Committee argued that 'a very friendly spirit may be reached without any formal organisation, if the principle of the "open door" is applied so sincerely that parents who visit the school casually are made to feel at home and encouraged to lend a hand'; but there was among teachers 'a very common fear that, if parents are encouraged to participate, they will use their position to interfere with the teaching side of things; will pry and criticise, and make life unbearable'. It was suggested, however, that 'one of the best ways of coping with the noisy nuisance of a parent' was to have a formal association, the discipline then being imposed by other parents.

In 1948 the Joint Four, representing mostly teachers in grammar schools, reported that out of 1,073 schools which had completed questionnaires 290 had formal associations and another 650 had contact between parents and staff without formal association. The summary of merits and demerits of a formal association, published in *A.M.A.* for November 1948, is still worth reading:

> **Merits**
>
> There is increased opportunity for parents and teachers to meet to discuss particular points and the welfare of the children.
>
> There is mutual help in improving the attitude of children (and adults) to work, sports, hobbies and discipline.
>
> It has been found essential to secure the goodwill of parents before beginning courses of sex education for the first time.
>
> There is increased enthusiasm for school functions, greater help over visits to works and places of interest outside school.
>
> There is help with the provision of extra facilities and amenities for the school.
>
> Rotas of parents have been arranged to help with school meals.
>
> Recommendations to Local Authorities have more weight and are better supported in coming from an association rather than a staff.
>
> Shy and diffident parents are better able to meet the staff.
>
> **Demerits**
>
> There is a fear or dislike of having an association foisted on the staff by the head, the LEA, or a few aggressive parents.
>
> The affairs of such an association must make a demand, great or small, upon the leisure time of the staff.
>
> Some of the activities of the association will seem trivial or worthless (jumble sales, whist drives, dances, etc. to raise money). In fact the apparently ceaseless search for money may seem the greatest of all drawbacks.
>
> The staff will feel a lack of sympathy with some of the social activities used for 'getting-togetherness', since the cultural and social pursuits of the parents, on the average, will be below those of the staff.
>
> There is a risk of interference by parents in the affairs and work of the classroom and in the internal discipline of the school.
>
> A few parents of the wrong type can spoil a good association.
>
> There is a serious encroachment on school and leisure time if all the parents want to talk individually with members of the staff.

A year or two later the National Association of Head Teachers issued a pamphlet on the subject which made two additional points. The first was that associations of parents were more likely to flourish in small areas of homogenous population than in wide mixed areas—hence their greater frequency and success when based on primary schools than on secondary schools. The second raises what is perhaps a fundamental question over-hanging the whole issue:

> Heads state that the parents who join are those already interested in their children's education and that those with whom they have difficulty in making contact are rarely members. The objection that a parent-teacher association divides members from non-members may have some weight in this connection.

By this time (1950) there were various groupings of associations in different parts of the country—so much so that the chairman of one of them, the Home and School Council of Great Britain, pointed out that they were 'all in competition, seeking each to augment its number of affiliations' and that other bodies might be anxious 'that no national federation should be formed'. The Home and School Council itself, which is no longer heard of, had been founded in the early nineteen-thirties under the impetus of what was called the New Psychology to help close the gap between what teachers knew about children and what parents knew about children and to concentrate the minds of both on the psychological needs of their charges.

Today there is a National Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations, to which thirteen regional groupings are affiliated. How many schools have associations is not known; probably not more than one in five. One of the enthusiasts of the movement, Mr. A. N. Gillett, wrote a few years ago:

> Some of the best have an educational programme of talks, discussions, brains trusts, and films with which are mingled social events such as dances, refreshments, informal discussions and outings. The most important subjects are health, leisure activities and child study, which concern parents directly; secondly, the subject of education so that they understand the school and how to support it . . . The association may also take up questions which concern children in general, such as road safety. It often provides equipment for the school, which cannot be supplied by the Local Education Authority.

The National Federation publishes a magazine *Parent-Teacher*, organises conferences, gives advice on how to start and how to organise associations, and from time to time sends delegations to the Department. Its ninth annual conference was held in May 1965. Among the resolutions passed was one urging that 'properly accredited representatives from parent-teacher organisations should serve on education boards and committees at all levels'. The Secretary of State, when approached by the National Federation on this point, undertook to bear the suggestion in mind in appropriate cases where he made the appointments. For the rest he suggested that the matter be pursued with the local authorities.

Apparently without collusion the same subject was considered at the 1965 conference of another national grouping of local associations, the Confederation for the Advancement of State Education. CASE represents a newer movement than the PTA's, differing from them in the main in being based not on the school but on the area of one or

more Local Education Authorities. Some local associations have discovered that one way of securing representation on education committees is to persuade a committee member or two to join the association. Others found that asking the education committee to co-opt a CASE member was valuable, even if unsuccessful, because it made the committee aware of the existence of a body of people interested in education. CASE, which now has over a hundred local associations on its books with a combined membership of 8,000, accepts that it cannot claim to represent parents—99 per cent of whom do not belong—but does claim to represent the right of parents to be represented.

This brief account of trends in home-school relationships over half a century has shown that several separate strands have become interwoven. In practice no doubt they will remain interwoven, and be the stronger for it; but it is useful to sort them into categories. They range from the personal through the pedagogic to the political.

The personal element arises directly from the parents concern for the child, and at its most elementary takes the form of a wish to know what the school is trying to do for the child. The increased attention given to the young over the period surveyed, ranging now from pre-natal and post-natal care to the almost hypnotic attention to the activities of teenagers, has undoubtedly led to an increased appetite by parents for information about the influence of the schools. This appetite is given still further edge by enhanced economic and social mobility, and by the realisation of the role of the school as a determinant. Thus in a 1960 survey by the University of Leicester of parental attitudes on a municipal housing estate* nearly two-thirds of the reasons given for preferring a grammar school had to do with economic and social betterment. In this context the operations of the 11-plus selective examination have acted as a focus—and with the same incendiary effect as a magnifying-glass catching the rays of the sun.

How far the simple appetite for information has been fed by the schools is difficult to assess. A PEP survey in Greater London in 1957† showed 35 per cent of parents feeling that they were not told enough or would like to be told more. A larger proportion of parents in the managerial and professional group than in the remaining groups were satisfied with the information they received; but this may be partly because they were more vigorous in asking for it. Where there is less confidence to approach the school, or less ability to frame the key questions, there is a greater obligation on the school to go out of its way in volunteering information. Many parents need help and encouragement. Their attitudes towards their children's education and future occupation 'have been shown to be more highly correlated with measured intelligence and school performance than others such as income or the social grading of the father's occupation.'‡ Douglas has shown that when parents take little interest, their children lose ground in the tests and gain rather fewer places in the selection examinations than would be expected from their measured ability', and that those 'whose parents are ambitious for their academic success, have an increasing advantage during the year they are at primary

*F. Musgrove, Parents' Expectations of the Junior School. *The Sociological Review*, July 1961.
†*Parents Views on Education*. January, 1961.
‡The Sociology of Education. *Current Sociology*, Vol. VII, No. 3, 1958.

school'.* One is left with an uneasy suspicion that the schools, by giving more information where it is asked for and more readily understood, may be widening the social handicaps to educability rather than narrowing them—though who in the circumstances would propose that they should do otherwise?

At its worst there is no communication at all. The PEP survey is now nearly ten years old. But how many parents in 1966 are saying 'My girl is worried, the teacher won't listen', or 'I asked why my daughter is not getting on at school but got no comment', or 'My boy was unhappy at school, but I was never told by the school'? It is distressing that the latest book on the primary schools,† and one written moreover from the sociological standpoint, should have to say: 'Lastly, some mention should be made of those adults who have no particular business in primary schools but who come as visitors . . . who should in fact have vitally important business there: the *parents*'.

Too often the main channel of communication is the knot of mothers at the school gate at the end of afternoon school. Many schools undoubtedly try hard, with open days and the like; but anyone who has seen the little queues of anxious parents waiting for their precious five minutes with teacher cannot but feel sad if this is the only opportunity for them to pool their understanding of the child. If all the parents came to these primary school 'at homes' every teacher would need to give three hours or more of non-stop counselling—an intolerable burden for all concerned. Are there not more imaginative ways of tackling the problem, and on a basis that does more justice to all the children at a school?

Before the question can be answered it is probably necessary to consider the second strand of parental concern: the pedagogic. The word is used here rather broadly to encompass all those developments in the curriculum and in teaching method, and indeed their relationship to examinations and to entry to further and higher education, without which parents nowadays can only be dimly aware of what their children are doing at school, and why. In their study of the impact of grammar school education on working-class life,‡ Jackson and Marsden gave a depressing account in 1962 of this aspect of their subject. 'There was bewilderment of almost every conceivable and utterly basic kind. Parents were unable to communicate their needs to teachers, and teachers steadily mistook the level and nature of inquiry'. As the plans for secondary school re-organisation mature and are carried into effect, many more children should have the opportunity of benefiting from a wider range of work. The grammar schools, Jackson and Marsden pointed out, worked 'on the unrecognised assumption that the parent has all kinds of knowledge about education and careers, and will approach the school with specific questions when he has specific problems. This fits well enough with that middle-class public which the grammar schools have always served'. It will not work at all for the comprehensive schools which are intended to become the pattern of the future, which will tend to be bigger than the the selective schools, and in which the pace of change is certain to accelerate as the reforming influence of the Schools Council takes effect.

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*J. W. B. Douglas, *The Home and the School*, 1964.
†W. A. L. Blyth, *English Primary Education*, 1965.
‡Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden. *Education and the Working Class*, 1962

The account given by Jackson and Marsden was perhaps too bleak when written, and in the years since 1962 there have been several new approaches: by the schools, by the parents, and by agencies concerned to help them both. The comprehensive schools themselves have been pioneers in this as in other respects. Several London comprehensives have teacher/counsellors on the staff to improve communication between school and home—indeed between school and child where home conditions are particularly foreign to the purposes of the school. Others have continuous programmes throughout the school year of explaining their aims and methods to parents—singly and in groups. As an example one may mention the demonstration of English lessons, given to first-year and third-year pupils in front of a fascinated audience of hundreds of parents, who had gathered from over a wide area on one of the coldest nights of the year. But one need not stay in the London area or in the secondary schools for instances of this kind. Parent-teacher associations in the Midlands have been displaying an interest in the 'new maths' and it is reported that 'a terrific impression' was made on parents by a demonstration French lesson at a primary school. Another PTA in the region set up a display of modern teaching visual aids and was 'swamped by visitors from quite a wide field'. There was considerable response in the winter of 1965 to the BBC 2 evening series of television programmes about primary schools, 'Growth and Play' and to the further series, 'Discovery and Experience' from January to March 1966. There have been useful experiments (for example in London and the West Midlands) in starting discussion groups based on these programmes, the initiative coming variously from teachers' meetings, parents, principals of further education colleges and institutes and colleges of education.

There is a dearth of statistics; and in any event so imponderable a thing as the relationship of home and school cannot fit simply into the social scientist's questionnaire. But few if any would deny that there are still plenty of schools where the managers and governors, for example, might emerge from the twilight in which they often seem to operate and themselves assume the role of public relations officers for their schools. But the main task perhaps must fall to the professionals, who are best able to explain what the educational policy of the school is and how they are seeking to implement it. The cherished freedom of the teacher (wider than in any other country in the world) surely requires that some account be rendered of how the freedom is used—not so that it may be criticised, merely in order that it may be understood.

We may not want to copy either the Russian or the American systems in this country, but we might pick up a few ideas from both. In Russia, we are told,* 'every class has its parents' meeting. This is convened by the director of the school at the beginning of the session, and meets in the appropriate form-room with the teacher as chairman. Some of the time may be spent . . . listening to the teacher lecturing on some aspect of the children's education . . . The parents of the class will meet as a group once or twice every term to discuss general problems or to hammer out particular difficulties.' What still holds some teachers back from fuller communication with parents is the spectre of interference. But perhaps the real limiting factor—as with so much in the professional life of teachers in Britain today—is not so

*Nigel Grant. *Soviet Education*, 1964.

much fear as time. In areas where social handicaps are particularly marked the remedy may lie in making individual members of staff responsible for contact with the homes—but this is part of a wider problem explored elsewhere in this issue. Better trained teachers, with perhaps more of a sociological bias in their courses, should help to mitigate this problem; and so will a higher level of general education among parents. The remedy may in fact lie with the parents already. The headmaster of a secondary school has recorded in the journal of the Derby PTA Federation† how, 'on a lashing wet night, about five hundred people poured into the hall' of his school 'because each executive member of the school PTA 'took a list of twenty parents and visited the homes and asked the parents to attend'. The headmaster's conclusion was that the comprehensive school gives scope to the 'grammar' type parent to take up a socially dynamic role . . . on behalf of the *deprived groups on the doorstep*'.

In America 'parents have very much more say in the running of schools and policy-making for schools than they have in any other country'. That presumably is one of the things we do not want to copy here, where the responsibility for running the schools is shared between the elected councillors of the county or county borough, its education committee and officials, and the teachers they employ to do the job. This leads to the third of the strands in the home-school relationships, the political: and it cannot be too often emphasised that parents who wish to change policy or to accelerate its implementation can always resort to their elected representatives for the purpose. It is sometimes suggested that parents should be represented as such —on education committees or among managers and governors. Maybe. But it could be argued that they are represented already as voters; and while parents as managers and governors might have a useful contribution to make their pressure could raise difficulties if their own children were attending the school.

At every full school inspection the unspoken question is: what is the nature of the relationship between this school and the community it serves? It will sometimes be that of an oasis, sometimes a fortress. A fairly safe generalisation is that the relationship is better than it was but is far from being uniformly good. It is hoped to return to the subject in this journal from time to time, particularly to record new and interesting developments.

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†*In Step*, 1965.

The expansion of teacher training during the next few years will put increasing pressure on the schools for classroom observation facilities. Closed-circuit television offers one answer.

TV in Teacher Training

HELEN COPPEN and ANDREW KEAN

In October 1965 the Brynmor Jones Committee on Audio-Visual Aids in Higher Scientific Education reported that very few teacher training institutions were using closed-circuit television but that many of them would like it installed, 'mainly for the purpose of demonstrating teaching techniques, and partly for the showing of detail to large groups'. In the April of the previous year eleven colleges of education had been invited by the (then) Ministry of Education to embark on an experiment which it was hoped would provide experience useful to other colleges. Five colleges in the North of England were linked to Leeds University Institute of Education and six in the South were linked to London Institute of Education. Their remit was 'to assess its (closed-circuit TV) use for student observation of pupils being taught both as a means of reducing the burden on schools and for any other advantages it has to offer', and the colleges set about their task in a number of different ways. Different styles of facility were installed, different arrangements of cameras were tried. The colleges met regularly to exchange information and experiences, and in the summer of 1965 both groups produced an interim report offering technical information as well as some tentative conclusions about the use of the medium. What follows is a digest of the conclusions that were reached.

Techniques and Equipment

Essentially two ways of using closed-circuit TV to observe classroom activities were tried. One is to set up cameras in the school and transmit picture and sound to the college by means of a cable or by microwave signals, placing viewing screens in one or several rooms. The second way is to bring the children to the college for the lessons which are to be observed. The lesson is given in a studio-classroom adapted for the purpose. The advantage of this system is that the studio can also be used for presenting lectures which can be viewed on screens elsewhere in the college.

Two cameras, if manually operated, are the minimum requirement for observation work; but in a remotely controlled set-up a third camera is necessary to improve fluency and flexibility in the presentation of a classroom situation.

Remotely controlled cameras are fixed to the wall and placed at a height which does not give unusual angle shots of children's faces. In one or two colleges a monorail has been installed to carry one of the cameras, giving much greater flexibility. The advantages of remotely controlled cameras are that, no person other than the teacher is present in the classroom, and the spontaneous behaviour of unsupervised children can be observed. One person can oversee the programme

with a remotely controlled set-up and can give direct instructions and help to the cameramen. Also—an important advantage—there are no cables lying about for children to trip over.

Disadvantages of the remote-control system are the slow, and often noisy, camera movements and the loss of detailed visual coverage that manually operated cameras give. There is also a lack of adaptability for any one lesson, but of course variations to the camera arrangement can be made for different lessons. On the other hand manually operated cameras appear to create much greater disturbance of the classroom situation than remotely controlled ones, need much more floor space, and require more highly trained operators. They allow a much more detailed and accurate visual coverage of a lesson, however, and have a degree of adaptability that a comparable remote-control system does not.

Colleges have found need for a studio, and when children are brought to the college the studio will also be the classroom. The studio classroom is usually a room converted and adapted for the purpose, the aim being to create a multi-purpose room, with facilities for rapid conversion from classroom to playroom and with adjustable furniture for children of various ages. External light should be excluded and fluorescent tubes installed giving a fairly high level of overall illumination. Ventilation is best provided by a false ceiling through which fresh air can be forced by electrical fans. A control room of adequate size should adjoin the studio and be separated from it by one-way vision glass.

Special attention must be paid to the acoustic properties of the room; walls should be treated with acoustic tiling, as should the ceiling. The floor should be covered with rubber tiling or carpets and external noise should be excluded by double glazing or by selecting a room on the quietest side of the building.

Special problems are presented by the need to pick up children's voices, which are often very quiet, from different parts of the room. Sound problems may be tackled in several ways; the commonest used so far is to suspend six or more cardioid microphones from the ceiling. The teacher should be provided with a radio microphone rather than one of the halter type which seriously impedes movements.

Choosing a System

When embarking on the use of closed-circuit TV for the professional training of teachers there are a number of stages to which attention must be paid. During the preparatory stage, thought must be given to the purposes the installation is to serve. Those members of staff who will be involved in its use should have some understanding of its potential—only then can the type of installation be chosen.

If there is a school within about three miles, colleges may prefer to link up with it rather than to bring children to the college. Two ways of doing this have been tried: by microwave relay or land-line. The microwave system requires capital outlay and its feasibility depends on the terrain and on the permission of the GPO; the cost of a land-line falls heavily on recurrent expenditure and trouble may arise over wayleave in built-up areas. Whether children are brought to the college or remain in their own school the college should have a studio, ideally one that has been specially built for the purpose.

However, many colleges will have to convert an existing room and when doing this it is essential to take expert advice. Many installations have been seriously handicapped or gravely delayed because of the difficulty arising from employing architects and builders ignorant of the special requirement of closed-circuit TV work. Once these matters are settled, the equipment itself must be chosen, to meet requirements peculiar to the circumstances in which the installation is to function. Much time and money can be saved by consulting people with experience in selecting cameras, lenses, monitors and microphones, and at this stage the technical staff should be appointed.

Experience has shown that technicians or engineers with suitable qualifications are essential to maintain and operate an installation. The technical officer should be appointed before the equipment is installed and made responsible for its operation and maintenance from the start. In addition if this medium is to be thoroughly exploited, full-time academic staff should be appointed and trained for this work.

The actual installation involves consulting specialists, adapting the building, accumulating the equipment and putting it into operation. All the work should be planned ahead of time so that it can be properly phased. Building problems require special attention for experience has shown that it is here the gravest difficulties and most serious delays arise. Time must be spent in establishing good working relations with the schools taking part, since the successful use of television for purposes of observation will depend on their co-operation. The staff of the school should be involved in the work whenever possible and should understand the purpose of the demonstration or observation period.

Using the Medium

What will be presented to the students is a selective and partially structured view of a classroom situation. The direction of the cameras, the selection of a particular shot, and the sequence and interrelationship of shots, comprise a highly skilled educational task. The shaping of the programme must be related to an overall plan of professional training, and provision should be made for assessing the results of each period of observation. It soon becomes apparent that some replanning of classroom practice is necessary and that close co-operation between college staff and school staff is essential.

Before the actual period of observation students are usually introduced to the lesson and told what to look for. Follow up activities should include a discussion period, and short summarizing lectures or question periods in which the co-operating teacher participates.

When such preparatory and follow-up activities have been embarked upon, it has been found that students respond well, appear to grasp better the aims of the lesson they are watching, and appreciate more fully the techniques employed by the teacher. The value of these devices for guiding the students' observation—that is, for structuring the learning period—has yet to be estimated. It is clear that there is a limit to how long viewing remains effective. Often there is no need for a lesson to be seen right through. On the other hand it does appear that students themselves have limited capacity for extended concentrated watching. Their own estimate of the duration of the period of concentrated attention has ranged between fifteen and thirty minutes.

During the past months of experimentation and exploration of the possibilities of using this medium for teacher education, it has become apparent that the lack of recording facilities has seriously restricted the scope on the work. A presentation once preserved on video tape or on film could be made available to numbers of students, not only in the college of origination but in others as well, and over a period of years. It could also be repeatedly viewed and discussed. Longitudinal studies of children could be preserved for research purposes. The value and importance of video tape-recording can scarcely be over-emphasised. Attention should now be given to the selection of machines adequate for the purposes and allowing for the exchange of tapes between colleges.

In developing the use of closed-circuit TV for the study of children and of work in the classroom, it has been the common aim to facilitate the observation of normal lessons by introducing the least possible degree of disturbance. There are technical, production and educational problems to be overcome if this aim is to be achieved, and it has been found that some replanning of classroom practices is necessary; but studies of student responses have indicated that the training content of transmissions is effectively preserved. It seems that we must accept the fact that total normalcy is beyond the capacity of this kind of system and that our aims should be modified accordingly. It will be possible to develop a fuller understanding of the qualities and limitations of the medium and to design programmes that remain authentic while operating within the limitations.

To some degree, all observational programmes will have to be 'produced' and scripted at least in outline, as well as planned in co-operation with the school. The producer must keep in mind that what is actually observed is a television programme, and that the student viewers, at this stage of their experience, require that the content of the transmission should match the content of the observations they might have made in person. This presents the producer with some problems.

The viewers want to see clearly what is taking place in the originating room, and in order to accomplish this when normal daylight is insufficient there has to be supplementary lighting. The study of a page of a child's book is beyond the technical scope of most systems; and certainly the details of what is being written, if at any distance from the camera, are too small for any but the most powerful lenses to resolve or enlarge. It thus becomes necessary to treat children's work as 'caption material' by putting the book on a caption rack where lighting is adequate. This action has to be planned in advance, as has the use of specially designed maps and diagrams.

The student observers will wish to hear as well as see what is going on in a classroom, and this can only be partially accomplished by siting the microphones with great care, and programming the sequence of events to be observed, so that other noises are subdued when particular children's voices are to be heard.

Overcoming the technical barriers to the provision of acceptable standards of sound and vision calls for more preparation than that normally undertaken by the teacher. The expected sequence of events must be planned and tested against equipment patterns; cameramen and others involved in the transmission must be made familiar with its

details. At the reception end, provision must be made for viewing rooms to be free, tutors must be briefed, and their co-operation enlisted in recording students' responses, or in any investigations associated with the study of the medium.

Some studies point the way to the need for more intensive and extensive work if the medium is to be fully exploited. In attempting to discover to what extent the cameras constituted a disturbance in the classroom, one investigator found that it varies with the age of the children; in a reception class, a few of the five-year-olds will sometimes stop and stare, but others seem too absorbed in their own activities to notice anything. Juniors seem least affected, whereas teenagers tend to be somewhat self-conscious. On the whole the children tended to be 'on their best behaviour', This finding certainly needs closer study over a longer period of time, as does the problem of providing a commentary to a programme. Cameras are used to direct attention, to make visual comment as it were, and several lecturers have attempted to provide a running spoken commentary at the same time. We do not yet know if these two techniques interfere with each other or whether student observers at this stage of experience need the verbal comment to help interpret the visual comment. An extension of the idea of directed observation lies in the use of preparatory guide-sheets or 'briefing talks', to alert the students' attention. Are such guide-sheets necessary if the visual and the verbal comment during the transmission are adequate?

Once closed-circuit television is accepted as a valid means of enhancing teacher training, more general questions occur. If students can respond with relevance to questions raised in the study of methods of teaching, can these responses be evaluated in order to determine if such observations as the students make contribute something of measurable value to their training? What techniques can be devised for measuring these effects? If television proves to be as effective a medium of visual communication in this field as it has done in other subject fields, can assimilation rates for visual displays be assessed and can retention periods be determined? Broader studies are needed of the effect on schools, on college timetables, and on the balance of staffing, of the use of television in teacher training. Important too is the study of relationships which might be developed between university, college and local or regional closed-circuit television systems.

Those of us who have been engaged in this experiment are satisfied that the use of the television medium not only reduces the pressure on schools but permits a more effective quality of observation. We are aware that the range of our experiment was limited and we believe that not only can procedures in this field be refined while techniques are extended, but also that further work will have major implications for training as a whole.

The launching of the Russian Sputnik shook American thinking about many things. It led to a complete re-evaluation of what was being taught in schools, first in technical subjects, then in others.

The American 'Project English'

GEORGE C. ALLEN

The American 'Project English' was born in 1962 as a five-year effort to improve the teaching of English in US schools. It came when it did for a number of reasons. First there was the general dissatisfaction with the existing educational tradition; this had been for years preoccupied with the 'melting pot', the social assimilation of innumerable immigrants and their children; and its very individualist philosophy went back through Dewey and Spencer to Rousseau. But the content of education had been neglected; the average American pupil certainly seemed happy and socially adjusted, but did he know enough? To many the answer appeared no. The second main cause was dissatisfaction with inefficient English teaching in a situation very like our own: the teachers were teaching, without much conviction, the kind of English long since disowned by serious academic opinion (already hard at work putting its own house in order). And the third was the successful launching in 1957 by the Russians of *Sputnik*, which shocked Americans to an extent which we can hardly realise. With remarkable speed they decided to do something about it. The 'new science' and the 'new mathematics' were already under way, and their progress was accelerated; modern languages were taken in hand with a major federal project in 1958, and in this year the National Defence Education Act provided an opportunity in the name of defence to break through the barrier which had previously inhibited so much Federal spending on education. English was clearly next, and in some remarkable discussions the English teachers and scholars made it clear what they needed. At first the tendency was to think mainly of more efficient verbal communication, a one-sided approach which would only defeat its own ends. But professional opinion quickly dealt with that difficulty, and Project English can claim to have taken under its wing every possible aspect of English teaching.

Project English at present commands a yearly federal budget of $2½ million; but many of its projects have also attracted very large local funds from education authorities, universities and private foundations. It has been controlled until now by an extremely small staff at Washington working closely with professional advisory committees from outside; evaluation involves not only English experts but educational psychologists and others, and there is sometimes tension between the two. Its main effort has been channelled into two fields. First come well over 100 research projects covering a very wide field indeed; up to February 1965, 114 projects in basic and applied research had been supported and 25 completed, dealing with such diverse subjects as college freshman's composition, a comparison

of reading, writing and spelling achievement among groups of English, Scottish and American children, and studies involving such major issues as the effect of environment upon a child's command of language and the progress which he makes moving up from year to year at school. One excellent conference on 'Needed Research in English' held at Pittsburgh in 1962 opened the eyes of more than one British reader some time ago and seemed at least to ask all the right questions; whether or not one rates all the projects equally highly there is no doubt about their cumulative importance.

But the second and to a foreign visitor the most fascinating main aspect of Project is its series of 12 Curriculum Study Centres. These are located in universities, and I visited centres at Pittsburgh, Minneapolis and Eugene, Oregon, as well as a somewhat different kind of centre at Cleveland. Each individual ordinary centre was allocated up to $250,000 from Federal Funds over 5 years, though this sum has since been exceeded in some cases, and was in any case usually backed up by local contributions in cash and staff time. Imagine a few rooms, never pretentious, in a characteristic campus building which differ from our equivalent buildings only in being designed for a more extreme climate and—like most American schools I saw—having more efficient secretarial machinery than we alas can usually expect; if I asked for a document, a photograph would often be provided in a few minutes. Running the centre will be a professor of English, with some assistants who almost certainly will include some of those younger part-timers working for their PhDs who make so large a contribution to American academic work and life. Different centres have different objectives: thus Hunter College, New York, is concentrating on English for disadvantaged children in early adolescence, Illinois is concerned with initial teacher training, Oregon is preparing a curriculum in language, literature and rhetoric for children between roughly 12½ and 18 (Grades 7-12); Minnesota is particularly concerned with language study, and Nebraska with composition, this last taken over the entire range of school life and interpreted very widely indeed. To quote from an account of the Nebraska venture, 'The difficulty with curriculum change is that it would appear to involve the changing of the whole world'.

Short of this, however, the work of a typical centre is most detailed and planned and carried out with great care. During the summer vacation there are usually major workshops at which, often in small groups, school teachers and university scholars hammer out between them the kind of improved curriculum that they want to see in school. During the academic year the results are set down in the form of experimental curricula, often going into great detail, which are tried out in many schools, and then improved, perhaps at a workshop in the long summer vacation. The work is professional, and paid for as such; a junior university assistant may earn up to $2,000 for his contribution to a workshop, the participating teachers perhaps $500. The ultimate aim is effective dissemination, but there remains a good deal of doubt how this may best be done. Will the job be left to the textbook publisher? Some feel misgivings, though it is fair to say that the best publishers would probably meet all the requirements of the centres in respect of such matters as teacher-handbooks (generally more important than pupil material), revision and so on. Though some of the centres offer several features in common there seems little risk of an official line

developing, if only because different centres offer such different alternatives; in any case the courses are generously conceived, and offer far more alternatives and possibilities than the traditional syllabuses which they replace—no longer will almost all normal American children read Julius Caesar and write out their autobiographies up to 10 or 11 times, as in class after class successive unhelped teachers used to set the same theme for lack of any better ideas.

I have already mentioned the mutual respect between university scholar and the teacher in school; both have learned to work together. But the scholar is determined about two points. First the school curriculum in English must be something more than the traditional 'rag-bag' which it so often was in the days of unalloyed 'social adjustment'; it must be properly worked out and academically evaluated and its approach to grammar and language study, for example, needs to be one that the scholar need not reject. Second, research and development are seen as two sides of the same process; we cannot afford to wait, as in the past, 40 years between the inception of an idea and putting it into practice.

Of the exciting effects in the schools I saw much. Thus in a number of Junior High Schools in Oregon I saw transformational grammar being taught to children of between 12 and 15. This is one of several new patterns of grammar, being initially devised by Noam Chomsky of MIT; it is influenced by mathematical set theory (which also has a considerable part to play in the new mathematics). In Nebraska at about the same stage teachers—and their flocks—were being introduced to important and exciting considerations of meaning; the teachers were being invited to consider the implications of our own Oxford philosophers, and I remember a long and fairly remote car journey in which we discussed Wittgenstein with unabated vigour, while the car, by now out of gas, stuttered and free-wheeled to a providential filling station. Within literature the range of reading has been greatly widened and deepened, from Peter Rabbit upwards.

How far can one or should one evaluate Project English as a whole? As I have already suggested, American teaching and learning conditions differ from ours in many respects. With so many smaller schools, a mainly undifferentiated curriculum and but little ability-streaming, their curriculum inevitably lays more stress than we should normally think necessary upon the didactic element, and particularly the acquisition of a necessary number and pattern of facts; to our way of thinking it may not always allow sufficiently for attitudes or the different ways in which children mature at different stages, but the Americans may very fairly ask whether our own approach to English is not a trifle haphazard by comparison. The pupils themselves seem a little more serious than ours, and are called and treated as 'students' from the 5-year-old in kindergarten right up to college. The teaching is on the whole more professional than much of ours, and one sometimes misses the inspired amateur touch which in England so often comes to the rescue of much uninspired amateurishness. I suspect that in our virtues and our vices the Americans and the English often complement the other.

A good deal of the thinking behind the American Project English derives from other fields; it is, for example, much affected by the most influential book in current American education, Professor Jerome

Bruner's study of *The Process of Education*, an elegantly written account of a conference held, mainly by scientists and mathematicians, at Woods Hole in 1959. Bruner stresses three principles in particular; structure (the patterning of knowledge so that human intelligence can grasp and use it), learning readiness, and intuition which, he feels, traditional methods of instruction often overlook. Children should come to a sense of structure quite early on, inductively and through example, perhaps returning at a later stage of the 'spiral curriculum' to a more thorough study of similar material; but the curriculum must be articulated and 'sequential' i.e. thought out as a continuous and developing whole.

There is much here of which we can make good use. But parts of Bruner's thinking seem to me only partly adapted to English thinking, whatever it may mean in science. The theory is fine; in practice I suspect a tendency to introduce children too early to work for which they may not be ready, with consequences such as the empty verbalising which Piaget has described and which could be disastrous for real English as we think of it. As has been the case in England in a rather different way, there is too much stress on impersonal thinking, not enough on the personal, particularly for older students; so much in English should at every stage depend on the quickening of interest which suddenly sees the personal significance of a poem or a tale and is thereby helped to go more deeply into it. Whatever the professional sorcerer may make of Bruner's dictum that 'the foundations of any subject may be taught to anybody at any age in some form', the sorcerer's apprentice tends to interpret this as meaning 'Get on with it and teach them academic work as early as possible'; I hasten to add that we in England know this all too well from similar experience.

As for new approaches to the study of language, it is certainly important that all of us, children and adults alike, should discover for ourselves the new conception of language as a living force. But it is not enough to justify transformational grammar as a timetable subject by saying 'We teach it because it's there'. This will only make the American timetable, already as full as ours, even more overloaded. And the result could again be particularly serious for English as a whole, which (as I think the best current thinking in the UK feels very strongly) should have time to do justice to the contribution of language towards maturity and to all that literature can do for a mature and educated human being.

Thus while we may profit from a close study of both individual projects and of the curriculum study centres I do not think that our own English Programme, as the Schools Council gets into its stride, will develop on identical lines. In any case the British and American approaches to English teaching differ in some important respects; it is often not a question of 'which is better' but rather that in our differing circumstances neither is in a position to accept all that the other can offer. Yet how much there is that we can accept. And I see a dialogue developing between us which will help each of us to look a little deeper into his own hypotheses, all that he normally and conveniently takes for granted, just because we do start from different points. Yet we still speak the same language and share much experience and many values. The differences are not to be overestimated at a time when we in England and Wales are feeling our way towards a curriculum in which we take a more practical account of all that different kinds of

children have in common, just as the Americans are taking more account of all that differentiates one child from another, the less able from the more able. It is therefore surely essential that our own English Project should develop in close association with all that is going on in the US, and the contacts already forming between the American Modern Language Association, the National Council of Teachers of English and our own National Association of Teachers of English seem to me important and valuable.

What is the future of Project English ? There is some doubt. In 1965 the project was renamed the 'US Office of Education English Program'; whereas a project has a beginning, middle and end, a programme goes on, and the implication is clear and welcome. But the prospective shape of the programme is in some doubt. Originally 'Project English' may have been to our way of thinking rather subject-centred—concerned with English within itself as opposed to those aspects of English which affect other fields of work in which there is no 'subject' English in the usual sense—but at the end of 1965 there was some uncertainty in the US whether there would be any more specifically English 'Curriculum Study Centres' to succeed the earlier centres as these reached the end of their term. This may reflect current concern with such problems as that of the 'disadvantaged child' which can never be looked at wholly in subject terms; if, however, the main future work in English were to be absorbed by psychologically or sociologically orientated research and development centres, which are not subject-bound at all, that would be going to the opposite extreme. No longer need the seed time and harvest of research be divided by 40 years, but it will still take time to make sure of even provisional conclusions; there is the Hawthorne effect (the tendency for all new experiments to be successful just because they are new) to allow for, and in any case the educational hypotheses that underlie research are likely to continue to change. But that Project English is already making its mark and proving its quality is not in question. I could have said much more about the excellent teaching which I was lucky enough to meet, the kindness of every one I met, and the very high standards which the whole English venture is setting, and inspiring.

What the US is doing in its way we must do in ours; we shall go further together than alone and the UK has much to learn as well as something to give. Apart from specific projects we may take to heart the impressive though not excessive scale of operations in the US, the close co-operation between scholars and school teachers, the essential provision for in-service training which at the present time is perhaps our own single greatest need—and still far from being realised on the scale that is needed. Conversely we can point to some research projects over here which are already known and highly regarded in the US, though more are needed. Our best school practice could make a very real contribution to the US, particularly in respect of writing, of our best speech, discussion and drama, our best work in literature at almost every level, and our developing efforts particularly in the primary school and the sixth form. Certainly it means much to many of us in Britain that our own advance, which will be a long job over quite rough terrain, need not be without good company. Meanwhile the US is doing everything in its power to ensure that English is making a full and effective contribution to the new world—in every sense.

Our third statistical article discusses ways in which new techniques such as 'individualised data' and the use of computers are revolutionising the statisticians' job.

New Look for Education Statistics

PHILIP REDFERN

This is an age of change and one of the noteworthy changes that has taken place since 1945 is a rapid development in the use of statistics as a tool of public administration. Essentially this is the result of an attempt to convert management from an art based on intuition into a science based on quantitative evaluations. Nobody would pretend that such a revolution is—or ever could be—complete, and for the foreseeable future decisions on policy matters will have to be based on quantitative evaluations supported by qualitative assessment of the social, political and tactical factors involved. Meanwhile new methods and new tools are all the time being developed. That some forecasts and plans made in the past have proved wide of the mark cannot be denied. But few people would argue from this that the attempt to develop a quantitative approach supported by statistical techniques should be abandoned.

The development of education statistics in government is typical of the changes I have referred to. Whilst statistics relating to some parts of the education service can be traced back at least a hundred years, it is only in recent times that their range has been extended to the comprehensive quantitative description of the whole education service which is needed for the discussion of policy matters and for education planning. The questions which an education statistician may be asked are, of course, many and varied, and it is important to understand that no system of statistics can possibly provide a ready-made answer to all of them. Thus there will always be a need for *ad hoc* enquiries to supplement the regular collection of statistics. The role of the regular statistics is to provide the factual framework on which policy and plans can be built and special surveys can be fitted.

The education statistician's work is only half-completed when he has provided a quantitative description of what is happening today and what happened over the recent past, important though such a factual base is. He is being increasingly asked to erect a superstructure on top of this factual base: the superstructure consists of estimates of how the educational system will develop in the future on chosen assumptions. The difficulty of making such projections consists not in the complexity of the arithmetical processes concerned (this is an ideal task for an electronic computer), but in choosing realistic assumptions and giving the assumptions precise quantitative shape.

Individualised Data

The conventional type of education statistic refers to the number of students, or teachers, registered at, for instance, a secondary school on a chosen day. This is classified in all sorts of ways—for example, by

age and sex or by subject of course. The conventional method of collecting these statistics is to send to all institutions concerned a large (and perhaps frightening) questionnaire asking for the numbers of students classified in these various ways. The processing of the completed questionnaires is then usually done by punched card machinery. This is still the way in which the majority of education statistics are collected, including annual counts of students in schools, technical colleges and universities.

But there are fundamental disadvantages in this approach. If the statistician wants to cross-classify students by both age and subject of their course this must be provided for in the form design. If the questionnaire is to be kept within reasonable size (and we do really try to minimise this burden on headmasters and registrars), then only a limited number of cross-classifications can be asked for. Moreover, it might reasonably be argued that making elaborate—and accurate—analyses of student numbers is not a job which most educational institutions are equipped to do. This leads to the alternative approach of asking institutions to submit not counts of students, but lists of individual students with details, thus:

> JOHN BROWN, born 5th May 1949, now taking 1st year GCE 'A' level course in English, French and History, having passed GCE 'O' level at midsummer 1965 in English language, mathematics, etc., etc. Parental occupation: bank clerk. Previous school . . .

This, essentially, is I.D.—individualised data in its simple form. Its merit is that the statistician at the centre can, with the aid of an automatic data processing system, make all sorts of analyses not laid down in advance without saddling each educational institution with an impossible burden of preparing statistical tables. On the other hand the preparation of lists of students like JOHN BROWN and, say, 599 colleagues would itself be a formidable chore.

The annual school leavers survey is a good example of individualised data in its simplest form. We ask schools to give details of individuals who have left school during the school year 1964-65, say. To lighten the burden on schools (and our own burdens of data processing) we ask for a bare minimum of information on every individual leaver and detailed information about a sample of 10 per cent of the individuals —those whose birthdays fall on the 5th, 15th and 25th of any month.

The use of samples is an important method of reducing the costs of collecting information for all concerned. The disadvantage is that the results are subject to sampling errors, though the likely magnitude of these errors can usually be estimated from theoretical considerations. The school leavers survey illustrates another fundamental idea in education statistics. The survey is not a *count* of numbers of students in some sector of education at a *point* of time but a survey of the *flow* of students from one sector (school) to other sectors (further and higher education and employment) during a *period* of time. Increasingly it is recognised that a proper quantitative understanding of the educational system cannot be based only on counts of students and teachers at a point of time—detailed information is also needed on the flows of individuals; for example, from schools to university, from colleges of education into school teaching, in-course wastage and repetition within technical college courses and so on. Such information is an essential ingredient in projections and in a study of education as an integrated system.

The Full I.D. Proposal

A development of the ideas that have just been propounded leads us to the full I.D. system. The essential features of this are firstly that, as before, information is collected about each individual's activities—his participation in educational courses, his examination attempts and results, his later employment (e.g. as a teacher), as well as personal details about sex, age, area of residence and perhaps parental background; and, secondly, that all the information arising over a span of years but relating to one individual, JOHN BROWN say, is collected together in one place to form the educational history of that individual. In theory such records could be built up on written index cards; in practice his educational career would be coded on to an inch of magnetic tape processed by an electronic computer. The idea then is that a variety of institutions and other bodies would report to a data centre on all significant educational activities of all (or perhaps a sample of) individuals, to form a tape record of these individuals' educational histories. This idea has tremendous potential for statistical analysis, but it also has its own technical problems.

Let me deal first with the statistical potentialities of the full I.D. system. The main point is that the collation of successive bits of information about JOHN BROWN'S participation in education, to form a composite record about him, automatically yields information on his movements from one activity to another. An analysis of the magnetic tape record can therefore yield an almost limitless range of statistics both about student and teacher *counts* at a point of time and about *flows* of students and teachers from one activity to another. The range is limited only by the heads of information about individuals which the record contains. Thus, if parental occupation is not included in the tape record, this item obviously cannot form part of the resulting statistical tabulations.

The technical problems of the full I.D. system are to provide efficient means by which the large quantity of individualised data can be fed to the data centre, and to make available a means which will enable the computer to recognise that the record of a MARY JONES who attended a Birmingham school in 1965 should be linked with the record of a MARY JONES (or perhaps MARY HUGHES (née JONES)) who enrols in a Newcastle technical college in, say, 1967. It would go beyond the scope of this short article to enter into details on these interesting problems. They are currently under study in the Department of Education and Science.

But lest it be thought that such a full I.D. system is fanciful, I should add that the Department already has an I.D. record in respect of full-time teachers in maintained and direct grant schools and colleges. This record was originally set up for the purpose of handling the government-administered teachers' superannuation scheme, and the teachers' salaries scheme, for which purposes a full record of individuals' teaching service was required. The Department's record has now been transferred from written form to magnetic tape and it is from this record that most of our statistics of teachers, including flow statistics, will in future be produced.

In other countries I.D. systems for students' records are in operation or planned for statistical purposes, being in some cases linked to administrative record-keeping activities. Thus Sweden has had an I.D. record of university students since 1937, which has been handled

by computer since 1962. There and in other Scandinavian countries record linkage problems are tackled by giving each citizen a unique national identity number.

Other Developments

Another area in which statistical development is taking place is curriculum study. The need has been felt for some time to know more about what happens in schools—how does the pupil divide his time between various subjects at different ages in the different types of schools? What is the size of the teaching group in the different subjects at each level? What are the qualifications of teachers teaching particular subjects at each level in the different types of schools? And so on. This information cannot be derived from our present statistics nor from an I.D. record in the future. To meet these needs a special survey of a sample of secondary schools was launched in the autumn term 1965. In the selected schools each teacher was asked to complete a return identifying which groups of pupils he taught, what subject he taught to each group of pupils and how much time he spent with each group of pupils on each subject during the course of the week's timetable. From this information the computer can deduce how each student in the school allocated his time by subject. The results of this important survey will be analysed during the next year.

When the cost of public education in the United Kingdom is over £1,500 millions a year, or over 5 per cent of the gross national product, we need to have information on how this is made up and to know what the unit costs per student are in different types of institution and for different courses of study. This is an area in which steady, if unspectacular, progress has been made in developing statistics. For example, information on Local Education Authority spending in more detail than was previously available, has just been published*; this has been made possible by the introduction of new forms. But a fundamental difficulty in this field is that of distinguishing the costs associated with students following different courses in the same institution, because so many of the non-specialised resources of an institution are shared by students in different courses.

The Report of the Robbins Committee discussed the need to relate educational development to the economy's demands for qualified manpower, but emphasised the technical difficulties of estimating these future demands. Study and research in this area is proceeding in a number of places, and the subject is likely to be of increasing importance as part of the wider problem of economic growth. An essential pre-requisite to all such estimates of future demand is a solid base of facts about the present and recent past. We are unfortunately still ignorant about present deployment of highly qualified manpower. The 1961 Census of Population included a question on the individual's degree-level qualifications in science and technology and this led to the first comprehensive tables correlating such qualifications with a person's sex, age, occupation and industry. In the April 1966 Census the question on an individual's educational qualifications was extended to all disciplines (not just science and technology) and to all qualifications gained after the age of 18. This should provide a new landmark in this field of statistics. A still more powerful approach to statistics in this sector would be an I.D. record of employment. This would be

**Statistics of Education*, 1965. Part 1.

dependent on the existence of machinery for sending regular reports on individuals' employment to a data centre, but it would yield invaluable information on movement into and out of employment and from one occupation or industry to another.

Projections and Models

During recent years statisticians in the Department have been engaged in improving projection methods in a number of areas. The projection of school population has been published for a decade though its results have had to be revised upwards repeatedly because of unforeseen rises in the birthrate.* More recently the Robbins Committee, in consultation with the Department, prepared a projection of the flow, from schools and technical colleges, of students with particular GCE 'A' and 'O' level qualifications, and on the basis of this the Committee made their recommendations on the future expansion of higher education places. A revised projection of this flow of qualified students from schools and technical colleges was published by the Department in December 1964.† The third main projection area has concerned the demand for, and the supply of, teachers in maintained primary and secondary schools and in further education. Here the work has been undertaken for the National Advisory Council on the Training and Supply of Teachers, in whose reports the most recent results appear.

Space does not permit any detailed discussion of the methodology. But it would be fair to say that making better projections in the future will depend heavily on having a more detailed and comprehensive base by way of statistics of the present and past. More information is needed about long-term trends. In particular we need to know more about movements of individuals within the educational system and about the way that environmental and other factors affect an individual's progress through the educational system. Given this better data it may be possible in some cases to give satisfactory 'explanations' of recent developments—for example, the tendency to stay on beyond the school leaving age, or the trends in teachers' wastage rates. In turn this should lead to more realistic assumptions for the purpose of projections. To the extent that future developments in education hinge on more imponderable factors such as the rate of technological change, economic growth or new lines in social thinking—and even fashion—it would be idle to suppose that there is any prospect in sight of making very accurate forecasts of the future shape of the educational system.

Out of the work of making projections for separate parts of the educational system and a recognition of the fact that changes in the different parts of the system are closely inter-related, the idea grew of attempting to make a simultaneous projection for all parts of education considered as an integrated whole, using an electronic computer as a medium for carrying out the arithmetical drudgery. The educational system is considered as a number of activities or sectors, in each of which there are students and teachers. In addition there are employment sectors outside teaching and a sector for persons not engaged in either education or employment. The key feature of the 'model', as we may call it, is that people move from one sector to another during

**Statistics of Education*, 1964. Part 2, Tables 1–3.
†*Statistics of Education*, 1963. Part 3, Table 21.

successive time intervals, e.g. from secondary school into employment or, as married women, from the 'not gainfully employed' sector into teaching. The main problem in making a projection becomes one of making realistic assumption about the future propensities of people to make such sector-to-sector movements. Here again, if we are to make progress, we shall need improved data about past and present flows within and outside the educational system, and towards this I.D. data-collection machinery would make a very significant contribution. Apart from its use as a piece of projection machinery, a mathematical model of the educational system may also be applied to planning problems. The model's role in this case is to show how the educational system can be developed in order to achieve specified objectives in future years. Work on developing a computable model both for projection and planning purposes is being undertaken jointly by the Department and by Professor Moser's team at the Unit for Economic and Statistical Studies on Higher Education (London School of Economics). We are also co-operating in this work with Professor Stone at Cambridge whose work in the related field of economic models is well known. It is an interesting and encouraging fact that, just as I.D. developments are going forward simultaneously in a number of countries, so work on education models following broadly the same lines as our own approach is going forward in several places abroad.

Reviews

Concept Growth and the Education of the Child

by J. G. Wallace

National Foundation for Educational Research 42s.

Now that Piaget has become the most quoted (though frequently the least read) supporter of modern teaching methods, one might turn to this book for help in locating starting points from which the work of our schools might be developed on a rational foundation. Mr. Wallace not only assembles all the research references in this field since 1955, presenting them with impartiality in the relevant place in the argument, but he also adds a discussion on the best direction for future research. Chapter X is such a well developed concluding discussion that it would make a useful off-print for issue to all teachers. One could wish for more clarity, ready communication and simple illustration.

The major emphasis is placed on post-1955 research results so that the published work of Vinacke (1952) and Russell (1956) dealing with earlier work is not repeated. This does not limit the presentation of the controversy between the Behaviourists and the Piaget School on concept formation. As one might expect, the limitations of the Behaviourists' argument are underlined but with an intellectual honesty. He criticises the poor research design in Piaget's original experiments and he deplores the too often repeated work on the same basic design. Mr. Wallace shares the admiration so many feel for the elegance and careful design shown in animal experimentations and pleads for a similar basis to the experimental examination of Piaget's theories by other researchers. Though whether or not this will be achieved to his satisfaction in the near future is doubtful.

Teachers, while not ignoring the positive help being offered to them by research (small though this is) can look forward in the classroom to a good deal of opinion-based method. Primary schools see their duty as the need to provide experiences and activities which bridge the gap between the individual child's present position and the world ahead, relying on the child's mental activity to make him aware of the mental structures needed. No research so far published diminishes this need.

It would be difficult to praise too highly the achievement of Mr. Wallace in completing this study and opening up so many opportunities to look again at this baffling subject. The irony is perhaps that, within its covers, any student of educational psychology can select an apt supporting quotation whether his personal views lie at the Pavlov or the Piaget ends of the spectrum.

E.W.

Pedagogica Europaea

W. R. Chambers 75s.

This first volume of what is meant to be an annual publication should be accepted as a very welcome addition to studies in comparative education. Its sub-title, *The European Year Book of Educational Research* led at least one reader to expect something very different—a survey of research in one of several fields of European educational research for which a case can be made. Furthermore the present volume lacks the kind of pattern or homogenity of form it is reasonable to expect of a year book. Pedagogica Europaea is a collection of essays on aspects of education, some descriptive, some analytical, together with a series of reports from national and international organisations. The editorial board is representative of some of the best educational institutions in this country, Germany and France, but they do not appear to be a team.

A second aspect of the general policy guiding this publication is indicated by its title—it sets out to be a specifically European survey. But in the field of comparative education is it at all possible to be so specific, if not exclusive, in the range of interest? The differences within Europe from the standpoint of, for example, the organisation of the school system, examinations and the training of teachers are as great, to say the least, as the differences between Europe and other parts of the world; North America for instance and

the more advanced parts of Africa. I doubt whether the interests of comparative studies are best served by this prior restriction of perspective.

Perhaps the most interesting articles are those which set out in various ways to define what is meant by educational research. The first, *In search of research*, by the Professor of Education in the State University of Utrecht, argues, rightly I believe, that educational research must be related to judgment of value, and must be presented within the broad framework of educational or philosophical theory. At another level, Dr. Langeveld argues, research must be the handmaid of planning and researchers ought not to be unwilling to effect compromises with those charged with the responsibility of administering the system to be improved by research. I find everything about the article admirable except for the use of the term 'education': sometimes it is used to refer to the form or to the result of learning; sometimes to refer to studies in education, and sometimes to the administration of education. Consequently some of the statements strike the reader as somewhat strange—in what sense is one to interpret 'education' in the following—'A Western European country appoints a gentleman to be head of its office for Educational Research who had no previous experience of education'. Presumably he could at least read and write.

A second approach to defining the field of educational research is an extremely interesting article by Professor Mialaret, of Caen—*Recherche scientifique et pratique pedagogique*. It sets out to distinguish laboratory-based research, development work leading to the improvement of method, and the investigation of cognitive functions leading to the establishment of new principles of teaching. His analysis of the need not only to improve existing patterns but to discover radically new approaches to learning and teaching is cogent and valuable, while his list of researches at present being prosecuted in France is useful.

The third, perhaps the most expertly analytic and possibly also the most controversial—is Franz Hilker's *Les etapes principales de l'enseignement*, in which he sets out to examine the principles to be followed in the comparative study of educational systems. He maintains firmly that the only satisfactory system of classification of the data is one based on 'age levels' catered for in the organisational systems. It is a cogent, well documented examination, and like Hilker's work, characterized by a fascinating breadth of view. But why, one is left asking, should only one system of classification of the data be held to be acceptable? A more flexible and useful approach would be to classify according to the need of the enquiry, and this might sometimes be according to age levels, sometimes according to the explicitly stated intentions of the system, e.g. vocational or polytechnic as opposed to general education.

A second group of articles is in effect studies in depth of particular aspects of education, the most interesting of these being Kohnstamm's *Developmental psychology and the teaching of thought operations*. It begins by indicating the gap between the work of developmental psychologists and the practice of teachers—a salutory point to make. Without actually saying so he provides good evidence for saying that this gap is due to the psychologists bias towards the consideration of processes of maturation at the expense of those considerations which affect instruction, the considerations which the teacher, almost by definition, is required to take into account. Having examined the relevance of S-R reinforcement theories of learning to instructional theory, Kohnstamm argues in favour of what he calls 'the explanation method of teaching', the evidence for the superiority of which over other methods he sets our clearly and persuasively.

Other studies in depth include a review of *Psycholinguistic approaches to the study of development*, which is interesting but cannot hope to be as useful as some of the sections of Osgood and Sebeok's *Psycholinguistics*, and covers a good deal of the ground of Diebold's Survey 1954-1964 included in the second edition (1965). There are also studies of Educational Psychology in the Soviet Union, based on Simon's collection of Soviet articles in the publication of that name; a study of the criteria used in the selection of German

pupils for secondary education, and an examination by J. P. C. Roach of the tension between state and private enterprise, partly in the narrow field of examinations but necessarily also in the broad educational field. One is left with the feeling here that if the writer had been prepared to accept the assumption that his readers, if they were interested at all in the narrow field would have been well acquainted with the broader, a very valuable article could have been produced with the presentation of evidence, so far as examinations are concerned, that Roach, more than most people, has at his disposal.

Valuable though this publication is, and interesting though it has been to read some of the articles, one is left with the nagging feeling that the book could have done with a lot more planning and a lot more really severe examination of the appropriateness of some of the contributions to this kind of annual publication.

E.G.L.

Directions in RI.

The Changing Pattern of Education
by Sir Ronald Gould
Epworth Press 11s. 6d.

Children in Search of Meaning
Miss V. Madge
SCM Press 13s. 6d.

New Ground in Christian Education
H. Loukes
SCM Press 15s.

Group Methods for Christian Leaders
F. Milson
Religious Education Press 6s. 6d.

Education in Focus
E. C. D. Stanford
Religious Education Press 6s.

When one is faced with a group of books to read, all by well-known figures (and it makes it no easier if all are known personally to the reader), all on aspects of the same question, and all published roughly at the same time, it seems to be legitimate to ask: do all these add up to one point of view, however difficult that may be to get down in words, or do they help to reveal and delineate a basic and fundamental division in current thinking on the problem?

Sir Ronald Gould, in the Beckly Social Service Lecture, looks at the schools from outside, reminding us that schools do not exist *sui generis*, but because the society of which they form a part wants them: and the basic question 'what are the schools for?' is, if not a theological question, at least a philosophical one. He sees education as fitting the child to earn a living, to live co-operatively with others, and to live more fully as a person; whether we would all put the aims in the same order, they should gain widespread acceptance. And the corollary is that because we are all human, if our lives are not to be 'nasty, brutish, and short', we need education to help us to seek for 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness'. His conclusion is daunting: 'in the long run the only safeguard of religious education in publicly provided schools is a Christian community.' Of the five, this is the social document, reminding us that the schools cannot ultimately do more than the society which fathers them wants them to do, or inculcate values which the same society rejects.

Miss Madge, drawing on her wide experience of real children, and her familiarity with Piaget, Bovet and Goldman, gives us an insight into the way children actually think, and supports her thesis with a wealth of examples. She makes the plea, which might with profit be more explicit, that for children of this age religious instruction should reflect and exploit the 'holism' of their thought and experience, and not cut across it from our adult, deductive standpoint. This is a most attractive little book, and says what we all know but tend to forget, that no teaching or instruction can succeed which does not know the pupil intimately and affectionately.

Mr. Stanford is more concerned with the school as a community: indeed he says that the main line of integration in school should be through 'persons-in-community.' He quotes with approval Tillich 'the defect of the liberal-humanistic conception of education is that while everything is interesting, nothing makes an unconditional demand'. We may doubt whether the humanists would agree, nevertheless most experienced teachers will know what he means. He believes firmly that the meaning of life and of personal responsibility are questions which must be faced in school, and that these can only be worked out in a community which puts first experience

of worship, reverence for truth, quest of true character, a vision of excellence, and the acceptance of a cause to pursue.

Mr. Milson is the practical man, and most of his book is given up to sound advice to youth leaders. But in his most interesting opening section he gives the non-sociologist some insight into group dynamics. He points out that every group has an overt agenda and also a hidden agenda which can perhaps be the more important, because in the growing-together in pursuance of the programme the social warmth and understanding are generated which can become far more valuable to the members than the project on which they are ostensibly engaged. He postulates the most interesting theory that many young people may abandon church membership not so much because of intellectual doubts over the 'open agenda' but because of dissatisfaction with the 'hidden agenda': this form of grouping gives them no emotional or social satisfaction. His conclusion is that the group leader must 'sit where they sit' because such satisfaction, while it can be generated, cannot be imposed. He emphasises and reconciles the points made by Miss Madge and Mr. Stanford.

I have deliberately left Harold Loukes' book until last, both because it is the longest and most detailed, but also because it seems to help us in making a synthesis. Like Sir Ronald Gould, he is concerned with the society which creates the schools, and which lays demands on them. As a result of the 1944 Act, society said in effect to the schools 'Give our children what religious education stands for, but not what it is really about.' And because many good schools are the sort of community that Mr. Stanford envisages, this is what they did, by a process akin to osmosis. Because they understood their pupils, as Miss Madge would have them do, because they appreciated intuitively what Mr. Milson tells us about group dynamics, they succeeded in the actual classroom dialogue in conveying Christian values and value-judgments. But they did this through their own channels, and not through the agreed syllabus which laid on the school 'a burden grievous to be borne' of study in detail of large pieces of that most difficult of adult books, the Bible. Whatever value that book may have in transmitting from one generation to another the mores of a society which enshrines it as a treasure and accepts implicitly all it says, in the present condition of England if we never get beyond the Bible we never get at all into what religion is about as it appears to these youngsters. He proves statistically and conclusively that after 20 years of Agreed Syllabus teaching not enough facts are known or retained about the Bible to allow any real structures to be erected. To me, at least, it seems obvious that the structures must be created, and we can hardly do any worse by trying to erect them on open-ended discussion of the youngsters' own experience, calling in the Bible when we can as a tool, but never thinking that study of 'Jewish history and Syrian geography' is an end in itself or can mediate to youngsters what religion really can and should offer to young people as a dimension of living.

We must not make a tidy synthesis for the sake of making one. But the cumulative effect of reading these books straight through is something like this: the present state gives rise to grave disquiet; it is more important to know what society wants us to do, what our pupils can take intellectually and emotionally, how we can exploit our own expertise and the school community than it is to go on teaching Scripture knowledge which has been proved to have little impact on any but a minority of pupils.

Let Miss Madge have the last word:

'Teacher: Tell me about your picture.
Basil: That's the baby Jesus.
Teacher: I suppose the other person is Mary.
Basil: Oh no, that's the baby-sitter. His mother has gone out with God.'

Our philosophy and practice of religious education must be one in which that conversation can be exploited creatively, and not dismissed as an aberration.

T.R.Y.

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